

Attributes : a way of understanding OUV

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Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties

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Preface

The Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties' Japan Center for International Cooperation in Conservation is carrying out a range of collaborative activities targeting mainly movable as well as immovable tangible cultural heritage—including conservation practices, relevant research studies and human resource development—with different countries around the world. Another pillar of the Center's missions is to survey and disseminate international information related to the protection of cultural heritage. As part of this project, the Center has been organizing a series of World Heritage Seminars since 2017. The aim of this seminar is to share the latest trends in the World Heritage system with local administrators engaged in the concerned businesses in Japan and to provide them with an opportunity to exchange opinions on operating the system.

Regarding concepts and related legislative systems for protecting cultural heritage, each country has unique characteristics that reflect its historical and cultural background. At the same time, many years of effort have been accumulated in this field to facilitate an internationally common understanding and to create shared standards. In terms of immovable cultural heritage, there is little argument that the *World Heritage Convention* is one of the most significant achievements so far. Since its enactment in 1972 to the present, the *Convention*—together with its *Operational Guidelines* which have undergone repeated revisions after tireless discussions—has played a remarkable role in developing and deepening the general concept of heritage protection. On the other hand, it is also true that there remains much room for different interpretations on how the system should function in practice. Despite being an advantage in that it provides flexibility to adapt to various situations, this could present an issue of uncertainty about a common principle.

That is why we are now trying to ascertain how much difference or latitude exists in understanding the term “attribute,” the definition of which tends to be ambiguous in the field of World Heritage, by asking internationally renowned experts to contribute their own observations on this matter. The intention is not to establish or standardize a definition for the term; rather, it is because we believe that recognizing the fact that different interpretations coexists must be beneficial for future discussions.

The upheaval that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought upon the world in 2020 forced the cancellation of our seminar, just as with the World Heritage Committee meeting. It is disappointing that we cannot observe lively debate in person this time, but I hope this booklet will instead become a starting point to evoke further discussion at home and abroad.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the contributors who readily accepted our request to contribute their invaluable articles despite their busy schedules.

March, 2020

TOMODA Masahiko

Director of the Japan Center for International Cooperation in Conservation
Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties

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Introduction



Why Attributes?



NISHI Kazuhiko

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Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is one of the most important key concepts of World Heritage. A site must embody its OUV to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. In other words, it should be “outstanding” as well as “universal” with respect to its value. More importantly, each site on the List should be managed to conserve its OUV. However, in many cases the OUV is rather abstract in terms of daily on-site activities, so many site managers might encounter difficulties if they try to use the text of OUV as a guideline for their custodial work. Thus, it must be broken down into more concrete “parts” for site managers, local populations, and various stakeholders.

In recent years, discussions during World Heritage Committee meetings and other occasions have referred to the term “attribute(s).” It is normally understood as the value of World Heritage site broken down into smaller parts. The term or its concept has obviously been introduced to facilitate discussions and communications for site management and protection. The reality is, however, that there still seem to be difficulties because: a) “attributes” had not been discussed during the nomination process, especially for the sites inscribed on the World Heritage List up to around 2005; and b) interpretations of the term “attributes” vary even amongst experts involved in the management of World Heritage sites.

While I understand that it is quite natural to have wide variety of interpretations about such a general and philosophical term, we really need to have guidelines on how to understand and use such a concept, because this term is frequently used in conservation, especially in the process of reporting the state of conservation of World Heritage sites. Moreover, setting a clear explanation for attributes of OUV has been discussed as one of the most important processes of HIA, “Heritage Impact Assessment.” Indeed, our internal discussions concerning this term “attribute” started during our recent research project on Heritage Impact Assessment for World Cultural Heritage Properties in Japan, leading to this booklet.

This booklet

Since it seems the issue of confusion connected to the concept of attributes of OUV is in the diversity of interpretations, we feel we should start “listening” to various opinions, understandings and feelings about this term. That is why the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties’ Japan Centre for International Cooperation in Conservation decided to launch this project. We asked experts on World Heritage to each provide a short

essay. My message in the request email was simply this:

The booklet aims to clarify that the definition of “attributes” in the World Heritage system differs even among the experts. Your article will be inserted in the booklet to introduce your definition, your understanding on the present issues and cases you were involved in to give some idea on the range of the definition to the local people who are preparing the nomination dossier.

For contributors, we did not provide any specific guidelines for the text, so you will see the following essays varied in their form, viewpoint, and the like.

Various understandings and issues

The contributed texts show a range of understandings for “attributes,” such as “how to break down the value of World Heritage sites into attributes,” “how to deal with this concept,” “attributes and aspects,” “tangible and intangible attributes,” and “attributes of OUV vs attributes of authenticity.” The method of discussion also varies, from specific site-based illustrations to philosophical discussions.

We are truly grateful to have such an array of discussions in this booklet, and have no intention of reaching any specific conclusions. However, it would be useful to mention one of the main issues (as far as we understand) affecting how to define attributes of OUV.

If I understand correctly, site managers and other related experts interpret the concept of attributes though paragraph 82 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. This is partly because it is the main place in which the term “attribute” is mentioned among several basic documents related to World Heritage. But since OUV also relies on heritage values (World Heritage criteria), integrity, as well as adequate management, the attribute of authenticity is (sometimes) not enough. This notion leads to another way of discussing attributes, starting from the criteria side.

Theoretically, these two different ways of understanding attributes would have same meaning, because the value of any World Heritage site should be demonstrated by their site itself. Its value must have a direct connection to its substance. However, during the real work of tasks such as developing a nomination dossier, managing a site or evaluating its conservation status, even a small divergence in understanding of a site’s attributes may result in a different direction. If one should initiate the HIA process for a World Heritage

site, the first step is to review its attributes with respect OUV; the attributes of the site always play an important role.

Figure 1 is my understanding at this moment on the relationship between a site itself and its value through the concept of attributes. Some of contributors to this booklet seems to have more or less the same perspective (if I understand correctly).

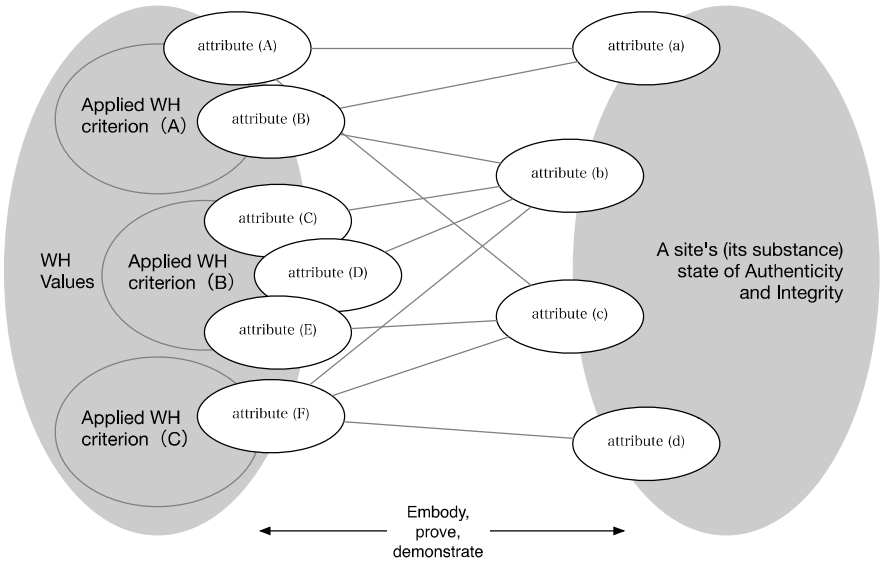


Figure 1: A way of understanding of the concept of attribute

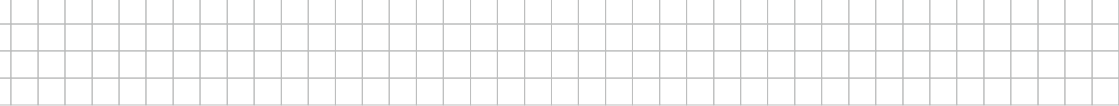
As for the ultimate goal, there should be a firm connection between the left and right sides. The value of a World Heritage site explained together with the criteria should be seamlessly consistent with the site itself. And, if so, texts on attributes should reach the same conclusion on these two ways of understanding or describing attributes, from the criteria side (left) or from the authenticity or integrity side (right)

Or perhaps two different but closely related factors—attributes of a value (mainly criteria) and attributes of a site (mainly authenticity)—can be understood as different layers.

The way forward

Therefore, we feel it would be useful to prepare a kind of guidance on how to discuss attributes of OUV. Although it is not the intention of this booklet to reach this goal at the moment, we believe it could initiate further discussions on this issue. Such discussions would have to deal with abstract ideas, because OUV is a type of “value,” which itself is a philosophical term. However, since the goal must be to focus on each site, or site managers and stakeholders, we should also remember to keep the outcomes of discussions practical as well.

The Institute’s editing team sincerely thank all the contributors for their kind acceptance of invitations to provide essays for this booklet. We will continue these discussions in order to better understand OUV and ensure that stakeholders manage World Heritage sites appropriately.



Discussion



Attributes for the Historic City of George Town, Malaysia

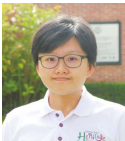
George Town World Heritage Incorporated, Malaysia



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Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca as a World Heritage Site

On 7 July 2008, the World Heritage Committee inscribed the serial nomination of two historic cities in Malaysia, namely Melaka and George Town, designated under the name of “Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca” as a World Heritage Site based on criteria (ii), (iii) and (iv) (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2009: p. 167). As shown in Figure 1, both the Historic City of Melaka and the Historic City of George Town, Penang are located on the west of Peninsular Malaysia, and are bordered by the historic Straits of Melaka (Malacca) to their west. (Government of Malaysia, 2007: p. 1).

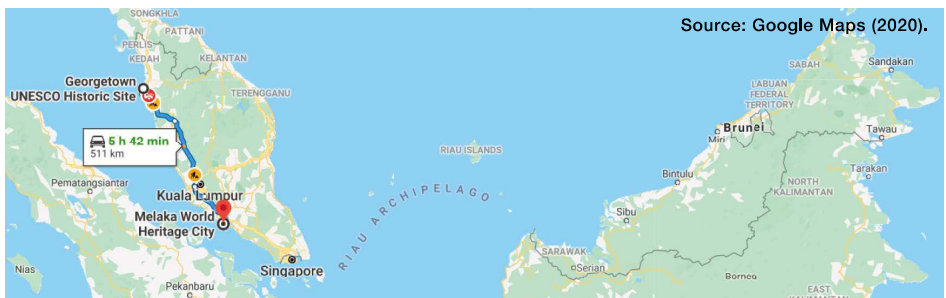


Figure 1: Location of George Town and Melaka in Malaysia

The following Statement of Outstanding Universal Value was adopted for this nomination:

“Melaka and George Town, Malaysia, are remarkable examples of historic colonial towns on the Straits of Malacca that demonstrate a succession of historical and cultural influences arising from their former function as trading ports linking East and West. These are the most complete surviving historic city centres on the Straits of Malacca with a multi-cultural living heritage originating from the trade routes from Great Britain and Europe through the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and the Malay Archipelago to China. Both towns bear testimony to a living multi-cultural heritage and tradition of Asia, where the many religions and cultures met and coexisted. They reflect the coming together of cultural elements from the Malay Archipelago, India and China with those of Europe, to create a unique architecture, culture and townscape (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2009: pp. 167-168).”

As George Town and Melaka are under different state governments and local authorities, both towns have developed their own site management plans, systems, and strategies that reflect the local needs. Such arrangement enables both cities to address the challenges and opportunities from the ground more promptly, despite their geographical, political, historical and social differences. Often, site coordination meetings will be hosted by the State Party (the National Heritage Department under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture Malaysia) annually. Table 1 provides a factual comparison between these two properties:

Table 1: Factual Comparison of Melaka and George Town

Name of City	Melaka	George Town
Property Size	45.30 hectares	109.38 hectares
Buffer Zone	242.80 hectares	150.04 hectares
Total World Heritage Site Boundary	288.10 hectares	259.42 hectares
Distance from Malaysia’s Capital City, Kuala Lumpur	145 km	361 km
State Government Administration	State Government of Melaka	State Government of Penang
Local Council	Melaka Historic City Council	City Council of Penang Island
Site Management Agency	Melaka World Heritage Office	George Town World Heritage Incorporated
State Party	National Heritage Department of Malaysia	

The authors declare that this article is written based on our understanding of attributes in relation to George Town and from the site management experience of George Town World Heritage Incorporated. Some of the strategies, approaches and programs written here may differ from our counterpart in Melaka. Space limitations mean this short article will only elaborate on selected attributes associated with the criteria, focusing on George Town. We will conclude this short article by suggesting a more comprehensive approach in identifying attributes for a cultural heritage site.

Attributes of George Town World Heritage Site

George Town is inscribed as part of the “Melaka and George Town, Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca” based on the criteria (ii), (iii), and (iv). Covering the George Town property and its buffer zone, we have elaborated some examples of attributes expressed through form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions, techniques and management systems, location and setting, language, and other forms of intangible heritage, spirit and feeling; other internal and external factors are also covered, as suggested in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (2019: paragraphs 82 and 99).

The first Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is **Criterion (ii)**, where “Melaka and George Town represent exceptional examples of multi-cultural trading towns in East and Southeast Asia, forged from the mercantile and exchanges of Malay, Chinese, and Indian cultures and three successive European colonial powers for almost 500 years, each with its imprints on the architecture and urban form, technology and monumental art. Both towns show different stages of development and the successive changes over a long span of time, and are thus complementary” (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2009: p. 168). Attributes associated with this criterion are:

1. The historic urban fabric that is largely maintained as it was first established in the town. The fabric is a combination of the principal historic road route, the different types of built environments, the location of the early ethnic quarters, and the influences of different groups of people that have once or continuously settled here in the town. This includes the location and setting of the Acheen Street Muslim enclave, the Little India enclave, the Clan Houses (Kongsi), the colonial administrative and judicial buildings along Light Street, and many more.
2. The remaining built structures of Historic Administration (such as the Town Hall, the City Hall, the Fort Cornwallis) and waterfront area (harbour, jetties, Weld Quay, the Ghauts, and go-down) demonstrate the colonial influences on the trading activities in the past and shaped the evolution of George Town. These attributes are based on its forms and designs, use and function, and also its material and substance.
3. The street names are a vehicle of town history. The street names of George Town mark

the presence and influences of various groups in the past and the collective memories of a place. This may be exemplified with Pitt Street (William Pitt, 1759-1806), which reflects the colonial past and the influence of the British. Armenian Street marks the presence of the Armenian merchants in the town, while the very same street was called “copper-smith street” by the local Chinese, which reflects the business there at a certain period of time. This is a type of attribute that encompasses location and settings, and also tradition, techniques and management system.

The second Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for **Criterion (iii)** mentioned that “Melaka and George Town are living testimony to the multi-cultural heritage and tradition of Asia, and European colonial influences. This multi-cultural tangible and intangible heritage is expressed in the great variety of religious buildings of different faiths, ethnic quarters, the many languages, worship and religious festivals, dances, costumes, art and music, food, and daily life” (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2009: p. 168). Attributes associated with this criterion are:

1. The religious spaces, buildings and monuments. The presence and continuing function of these historic places of worship demonstrate the multicultural nature of the town and the continuous influence and exchanges among cultures and religions, and their coexistence. Examples include the Kapitan Keling Mosque, Acheen Street Malay Mosque, St. George’s Church, Kuan Im Temple, Sri Mahamariamman Temple, and many others (GTWHI, 2016: section A4-10). These lie under the attributes of use and function, traditions, spirit and feeling.
2. Multicultural practices as a form of intangible heritage including performing arts, festive events, rituals, ceremonies, and practices that reflect certain universal views that are being practiced in this town (GTWHI, 2016: section A4-8). This includes the annual Hari Raya celebration, the Thaipusam, and the Nine Emperor Gods celebration. Over the years, these celebrations integrated cross-cultural influences and exchanges of expressions, such as ethnic Chinese participating in a Hindu activity, and ethnic Malays participating in the lion dance performance during Chinese New Year. These can be categorized as types of traditions, language and other forms of intangible heritage.

3. The multicultural daily life is exemplified by the diversity of foodways and languages spoken in the town that were transmitted through generations and are continuously evolving. It is a type of attribute in the form of language and other forms of intangible heritage.

The third Statement of Outstanding Universal Value is **Criterion (iv)**, where “Melaka and George Town reflect a mixture of influences which have created a unique architecture, culture and townscape without parallel anywhere in East and South Asia. In particular, they demonstrate an exceptional range of shophouses and townhouses. These buildings show many different types and stages of development of the building type, some originating in the Dutch or Portuguese periods” (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2009: p. 168). Attributes associated with this criterion are:

1. The evolution of architectural characteristics and building typologies of more than 3,000 shophouses in George Town exhibit her history as a trading town with influences from different civilizations. These shophouses, each with unique facade types, construction period, roofscapes, interior adjustments and decorations remain in, or are capable of being used for, their original or adapted purpose. This is a type of attribute based on form and design, use and function (GTWHI, 2016: section A4-11).
2. The historic streetscape and its features. The streetscapes of George Town are part of the city’s essential built heritage that form the historic urban fabric of the city. It is a combination of ensemble buildings and street features. One of the significant examples is the shaded public walkway along the shophouses known as five-foot ways.
3. The architecture of the shophouses. The shophouses in George Town built in different eras share several similarities such as the usage of natural building materials, as well as functional and decorative features. Examples of architectural features of shophouses include the use of terracotta tiles, the lime mortar moldings, and the cut-and-paste porcelain work known as “Jian-Nian.” This type of attribute can be categorized as material and substance.

Comprehensive identification of attributes

According to the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (2019: paragraph 79), properties nominated under criteria (i) to (vi) must meet the conditions of authenticity. The practical basis for examining authenticity and conservation of cultural heritage derives from the values attributed to the heritage (The *Nara Document on Authenticity*, 1994).

Attribute identification is important for heritage governance. As exemplified in the previous section, attributes are identified to further determine the elements that convey the Outstanding Universal Value of George Town. These attributes manifest the core value of George Town as a multicultural historic city. The coexistence of multicultural spaces, practices, and ways of life continues to influence others, thus helping to enhance the site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. Therefore, some of these attributes are unique and exclusive (such as building typologies), while there are also more that are inclusive and supplementing in their values, and are significant to the site (such as multicultural influences).

We need to protect these attributes to safeguard their values for George Town. One may not regulate value, but one can manage attributes, and develop efficient and effective heritage management for these attributes. In George Town, we have incorporated these attributes in the *George Town, Historic Cities of The Straits of Malacca, Special Area Plan* (2016) as the Conservation Management Plan for George Town Historic City. This Special Area Plan is a gazette document and is referred to widely by the State Government of Penang, the City Council of Penang Island, George Town World Heritage Incorporated, and heritage professionals. Indeed, George Town's attributes and its values are often referred to assessing planning applications under the Special Area Plan.

More importantly, as a living, multicultural, historic, urban site, we need to capture the tangible elements (such as sites, monuments, and groups of buildings) and sufficiently address the intangible attributes. In George Town, we explore beyond the physical boundaries of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, listen meaningfully to the stories from the grassroots community, and conduct proactive community-based heritage management, covering the identification, construction, discussion and protection of the attributes and values important to George Town.

By acknowledging that there is always room to improve the understanding and identification of attributes, particularly within a (multi) cultural historical urban site, it

has enabled us as the site managers to experiment with different approaches to identify, examine, and reexamine our attributes from time to time, making them both meaningful and relevant to the current context.

In conclusion, a living cultural heritage site may consist of attributes that are of tangible and intangible components. It is necessary to examine and re-examine these attributes with meaningful participation from the local people to prompt for collective responsibility from all. Doing so will enable attributes and their values to be meaningful and relevant to the current time and local context, thus prompting collective responsibility from the ground and ensuring that the heritage and their attributes remain available and can be passed on to future generations.

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Values and Attributes: Systematizing the Conservation of Important Places



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Heritage practitioners around the world seek to protect and conserve important places for future generations while supporting sustainable use for today's population. The challenge that they face is to determine how protection, conservation *and* sustainable use can be achieved at the same time. The answer to this dilemma lies in upstream processes that identify heritage values and their attributes, and in downstream processes that focus management actions on attributes or features.

In an earlier period, the conservation of historic places was seen as a simple process. Those responsible for such sites assumed that they instinctively understood the heritage values and how they should be conserved. As a case in point, reflecting on my experience with Parks Canada in the 1980s, I recall the response from site managers when the organisation tried to introduce a cultural resource management policy for National Historic Sites as a means of holding site managers accountable for the historic places under their stewardship. The site managers unanimously rejected the proposal, stating that they already knew how to manage cultural resources and did not need yet another constraining bureaucratic policy to provide guidance.

Notwithstanding this kind of attitude, under the influence of the *Venice Charter*, the *World Heritage Convention* as well as other heritage programs, processes to identify, protect and conserve important places have gradually become more sophisticated and codified. This systematization serves to bridge the gap between heritage experts and community site-based managers who are not specialists but play a key role in looking after these important places.

In addition to establishing methods for identifying heritage value, these new processes also codified the concept of attributes. The reason for introducing this idea stemmed from the need to translate the often-abstract statements of values into specific elements that can be managed operationally. Heritage values are not synonymous with attributes. In the World Heritage system, attributes do not have Outstanding Universal Value but they convey or express that value in a more quantifiable and potentially manageable way.

Examples from other jurisdictions may be helpful. In the 1980s, the government of Canada introduced a two-tiered system to guide employees who looked after federal heritage buildings across the country. As part of the identification process, the reasons for designation of each property were presented to the custodian in the form of a Heritage Character Statement. When operational managers complained that the Heritage Character Statement was too general to be useful, additional guidance was provided in a text that

described the specific elements that convey the heritage values and need protection, known as Character-Defining Elements. The difference between the two tiers of information is clear. For example, if a Heritage Character Statement identifies a property as a significant example of Gothic Revival style, the description of Character-Defining Elements would refer to specific architectural features that required protection and conservation, such as leaded windows, gargoyles or patterned slate roofs. That is the guidance that operational managers need for effective stewardship.¹

By the turn of the century, a new Canadian Register of Historic Places also adopted a two-tiered approach by requiring two statements as part of the listing process, one on significance and the other on character-defining elements. For the Register, heritage value is considered “the aesthetic, historic, scientific, cultural, social or spiritual importance or significance for past, present and future generations.”² The heritage value of an historic place is embodied in its character-defining elements, the equivalent of attributes in the World Heritage system. These elements include “materials, forms, location, spatial configurations, uses and cultural associations or meanings that contribute to the heritage value of an historic place, which must be retained in order to preserve its heritage value.”³

Codification of World Heritage practice in this same timeframe came with major revisions to the *Operational Guidelines* published in 2005. This systematization responded to the confused debates at sessions of the World Heritage Committee about whether or not the Outstanding Universal Value of a site was under threat or had disappeared. The confusion stemmed from a lack of clarity about what precise elements of the site were meant to be protected and conserved.

The revised *Operational Guidelines* introduced a new requirement for a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) and an articulation of the attributes or features that support or convey a property’s Outstanding Universal Value. Like the Canadian examples, this is a two-tiered system comprised of a general statement of heritage value, followed by specific direction on those elements that require management. The *Operational Guidelines* state that, at the time of inscription, the World Heritage Committee adopts a SOUV “identifying the criteria under which the property was inscribed, including the assessments

¹ Parks Canada. *Heritage Evaluation, Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office*. Available at <https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/beefp-fhbro/process/evaluation>

² Parks Canada. (2010). *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, 2nd ed. Ottawa: Federal Provincial Territorial Ministers of Culture and Heritage in Canada, p. 5.

³ Parks Canada. (2010). *Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada*, 2nd ed. Ottawa: Federal Provincial Territorial Ministers of Culture and Heritage in Canada, p. 253.

of the conditions of integrity or authenticity, and of the requirements for protection and management in force. The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value shall be the basis for the future protection and management of the property.”⁴

In addition to the SOUV, the 2005 *Operational Guidelines* also introduced the notion of attributes to the World Heritage system, particularly for cultural heritage. Linked to the conditions of authenticity, attributes in the 2005 *Operational Guidelines* take their definition from the *Nara Document on Authenticity*.⁵ The conditions of authenticity are deemed to be satisfied if the cultural values of properties are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes. The 2005 guidelines expanded the list of attributes to include form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions, techniques and management systems, location and setting, language and other forms of intangible heritage, and spirit and feeling.⁶

It is important to note that attributes, while specific, are not necessarily only tangible elements. For example, sacred sites might well have tangible elements such as stone circles (Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites, United Kingdom) or special forested areas (Sacred Mijikenda Kaya Forests, Kenya). In addition, they might also have intangible elements such as the powerful religious beliefs that communities attach to such properties. The *Operational Guidelines* acknowledge that some of the intangible attributes may present challenges at an operational level. “Attributes such as spirit and feeling do not lend themselves easily to practical applications of the conditions of authenticity, but nevertheless are important indicators of character and sense of place.”⁷

Building on the revisions to the 2005 *Operational Guidelines*, the 2011 resource manual on *Preparing World Heritage Nominations* further refines the thinking about attributes and clarifies the relevance of the idea for natural heritage sites. Chapter 1 has a glossary of key concepts, including the concept of attributes or features. Chapter 3 provides specific guidance with examples from existing World Heritage sites. This resource manual maintains consistent language for cultural sites, stating that attributes *convey or underpin* Outstanding Universal Value and provide the focus for protection and management actions.

⁴ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2005). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, paragraphs 51, 154-5.

⁵ ICOMOS. (1994). *Nara Document on Authenticity*. Paris: ICOMOS, art. 13.

⁶ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2005). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, Paris: UNESCO, paragraphs 79-82.

⁷ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2005). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, paragraph 83.

In addition to itemizing attributes for cultural sites as set out in the 2005 *Operational Guidelines*, the resource manual adds examples for natural sites. “For natural properties, it is more common to speak of ‘features’ although the word attributes is sometimes used. Examples of attributes for natural properties could include: visual or aesthetic significance; scale of the extent of physical features or natural habitats; intactness of physical or ecological processes; naturalness, and intactness of natural systems; viability of populations of rare species; and rarity.”⁸ In both cases, attributes or features may be physical elements but they can also be processes associated with a property that impact on physical qualities.⁹ It is important to emphasize that their selection flows from the SOUV and the justification of inscription criteria.

Preparing World Heritage Nominations puts special emphasis on the vital importance of attributes or features for understanding and maintaining the integrity of World Heritage sites. Integrity is required for both natural and cultural sites. In the World Heritage system, “integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes.”¹⁰ The resource manual for preparing nominations underlines the importance of the relationship between attributes and the selection of site boundaries. “A statement of integrity needs to set out how the collection of features, processes and/or attributes that convey potential Outstanding Universal Value are contained within the boundaries [and] that the property...exhibits a satisfactory state of conservation and its values are not threatened.”¹¹

Attributes or features are key indicators for monitoring efforts. When considering the health or state of conservation of a World Heritage site, the Committee makes its determination based on the condition of key attributes or features that flow from the SOUV. The aim is to ensure that the heritage value as well as the authenticity and integrity of World Heritage sites are sustained for the future through careful management of the attributes or features. A survey of documents from recent World Heritage Committee sessions shows that the language related to attributes and features is consistent for cultural sites but less so for natural sites.

⁸ UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN. (2011). *Preparing World Heritage Nominations (Second edition)*. Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, p. 32.

⁹ UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN. (2011). *Preparing World Heritage Nominations (Second edition)*. Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, p. 59.

¹⁰ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2005). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, paragraph 88.

¹¹ UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN. (2011). *Preparing World Heritage Nominations (Second edition)*. Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, p. 66.

In summary, attributes are part of a two-tiered approach that combines general heritage value statements with descriptions of specific elements that require management action. The process is the same regardless of jurisdiction--from global to regional to local heritage conservation programs. Whether it is within the World Heritage framework or other heritage programs, the underlying assumption is that if the attributes or features that support heritage values are protected and maintained sustainably, then important places will be able to enjoy a function in the life of today's communities while remaining viable for future generations.

The Concept of Attribute: A Basis for the Definition, Evaluation and Management of Cultural World Heritage Properties



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Introduction: general context of the *World Heritage Convention*, *Operational Guidelines* and reference texts

We should note that the term ‘attribute’ is today frequently used as a keyword for understanding and managing heritage, but it does not come from the origins of the international movement for heritage conservation. It is not found inside the historical texts of the *Venice Charter* (1964) or the *World Heritage Convention* (1972), on which ICOMOS and the World Heritage List are respectively based. In addition, it is not yet a reference word in some more recent notable publications as *The World Heritage List: What is OUV?* (2008).

Nevertheless, the term attribute should be considered as a common word, used quite frequently in the latest version of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (July 2019). It appears there with some substantive or adjective as ‘variety of attributes’ (§ 82), ‘significant attributes’ (§ 85) or ‘intangible attributes’ (§ 137). It reaches the status of a term having conceptual and methodological role in the manual *Preparing World Heritage Nominations* (Second edition, 2011). There, it is presented significantly in the glossary of key concepts (p. 31) under the name ‘attributes or features’; it is directly associated first with the major concept of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), then with knowledge and boundaries of the property (p. 56). Later in this text, it is associated with the analytical process for establishing authenticity (p. 61) and integrity (p. 65), and finally with property conservation and management (p. 89).

The occurrence of the term ranges from not being in the scope of practice to relatively frequent use, and to finally reach conceptual status. Indeed, for today, it seems more correct to speak of a complementary concept aiming to support and deepen the original basic concepts such as OUV or authenticity, and of a role of a practical tool for a methodology for heritage assessment and conservation.

The term attribute was introduced to help first in the inventory and description of a given property, then to support and express specific characters and qualities contributing to the definition of the value of the site. This is consistent with the meaning given by the dictionary for the substantive ‘attribute,’ with the addition of the idea of being a component or part of a whole. Reciprocally, a property is made up of a series of attributes forming a coherent ensemble, and carrying specific meanings and characteristics supported and expressed by the attributes. The term attribute is used when describing and analysing heritage properties, both in practice in the World Heritage nomination dossiers and by the bodies responsible for evaluating and conserving properties. It is not really a concept in

itself, but a generic term and a practical tool.

We have seen a considerable enlargement of the World Heritage List in recent years, both for themes and for cultural areas, with a tendency to massively extend property limits, serial components and complexity. So, today, we need a better understanding of the basic concepts, ideas and to better share our individual experience of using them. Nowadays, we share World Heritage concepts among many different cultures and traditions, and doing so requires exchanges and mutual agreement on the vocabulary related to the concepts, the methodology and their practical uses. This leads us to be more precise and more coherent in describing, analysing and monitoring heritage. This should be an important step not only for deepening intercultural discussions and the quality of assessment, but also for the policy of conservation and the transmission of heritage to future generations.

Two complementary concepts: tangible and intangible attributes

If we refer to § 82 of the *Operational Guidelines*, as does the conceptual definition of the manual *Preparing World Heritage Nomination* (p. 31) for defining the attributes, we see a list of practical categories closely related to the definition of property authenticity, which is in fact the real objective of § 82. It offers a short list of basic qualities for examining the artefacts making up a property and their meanings; first by consideration of their ‘form and design’ and ‘materials and substance,’ then of their ‘use and function,’ and of associated ‘traditions, techniques and management systems.’ It also pays attention to the ‘location and settings’ and to such associated intangible features as ‘spirit and felling’ and ‘language and other forms of intangible heritage.’ That leads us to some consequences and remarks related to the real use and status of the term ‘attribute.’

Such a definition by reference to authenticity of course makes a direct link with a basic and ancient concept of the evaluation of heritage value; however, it creates some confusion between the two ideas, so we have to clarify them. It seems preferable to start with the basic idea of an attribute as a constituent element of a given property, moreover having specific well-identified characteristics. The concept of attributes relies on two essential complementary dimensions: first as tangible facts that physically describe the property and then as bearers of associated intangible features (history, uses, social representations, etc.). However, there is no serious contradiction between this very simple definition when adding two adjectives to the substantive ‘attribute,’ and those of the manual resulting from the *Operational Guidelines* (§ 82). This is because we can easily share the different bullet

points constituting both what is authenticity for the *Operational Guidelines* and attributes for the manual, between the two tangible or intangible attribute categories. We just need to look at what ‘tradition,’ ‘use,’ or ‘technique,’ for instance, mean on a case-by-case basis—it could be tangible or intangible or perhaps both. There is no rigid frontier but frequently complementarities.

Conversely, authenticity analysis, as defined by the *Operational Guidelines* (§ 82), must be considered as the examination of a series of possible qualities (or weaknesses) expressed by a given attribute, and offer a set of characteristics belonging either to the tangible domain or to the intangible one.

Tangible attributes physically constitute and define the property itself by their addition, but also by their relationships. They constitute artefacts and evidence of human activities at the site; they are also the natural features of the settings that rely on human contribution. An attribute may also be the accordance of the two, natural and anthropological, as a joint construction or as a component of a cultural landscape, such as a bridge over a river, the plants in a park, etc. This is evident if the property is an agricultural area or a mining district; but it can also be the geomorphology of the site linked to human construction. It expresses what constitutes the physical reality and geographical context of the heritage. It expresses what exists in tangible terms, what could be described with precision in both scientific and aesthetic terms.

Tangible attributes are completed by intangible attributes, such as providing a complementary category of evidence. Intangible attributes are not directly made of artefacts constituting the site, but participate in the understanding of those artefacts. Intangible attributes rely on the knowledge of the site in the manner of what it is surely learned through study, and also through social beliefs and narrations of memories. This is supported by different human sciences such as history and archaeology, through rational and systematic studies of the sites, ethnology and sociology to determine social uses and representations, and the history of art and aesthetics, the history of religion and philosophy, and so on.

A brief overview of this idea of intangible meanings shows that it can be linked first to a given tangible attribute. That makes it a specific characteristic, justifying that it is not only a physical element but also reaching a certain sense and expressing significations. Generally speaking, when such individual characteristics are really important, supporting for example an historical event or playing a role in the human community of the site,

they illustrate qualities and characteristics of the whole property much more broadly than the initial individual attribute. Such a phenomenon then becomes a complete intangible attribute, participating in the narrative and the associated value of the site.

Summary one: A heritage property is made up of a series of attributes that can be tangible as artefacts and natural features, or intangible through knowledge of the site that comprises human facts (historical and ethnological), ideas, representations and beliefs.

The inventory of attributes

Because all heritage properties are defined by and constituted of attributes, any professional work must involve carrying out a complete and precise inventory for a given monument or site or cultural landscape. This task is very classical, stemming from ancient practices of awareness and protection of heritage, in particular of architects and curators in charge of monuments and sites. It is based on an objective description of what really exists at the site, determined through architectural surveys, mapping and stratigraphy of an archaeological site, etc. The initial objective was to clarify two still very important questions: the first is the state of conservation and planning of maintenance or restoration works; this existed in some countries from the early 19th century, such as in France ¹.

As we have seen, the term attribute appeared later, and it was preceded by very simple and general terms as ‘component,’ ‘constitutive element,’ and so on. These were supplemented by the use of technical and precise terms of architecture and archaeology, when they help to describe the tangible aspects of the site: tympanum, buttress, roof frame, set of stained glass, or hypogeum, foundations, wall paintings, archaeological furniture, or forge workshop, blast furnace, gallery, access road, etc.

What is the addition of the term ‘attribute’ and what questions or remarks are associated with its descriptive use? First is certainly the idea of characterizing the site and sketching what precisely makes its originality and value. This new formulation leads to not only precisely describing a component but also initiating what makes the current World Heritage methodology: what is its integrity and authenticity? Can I make justified comparisons with

¹ The ministerial office of ‘Monuments Historiques’ was created in 1834 by the novelist and poet Prosper Mérimée, and the first list of protected monuments and restoration works started in the 1840s, especially by the famous architect Viollet-le-Duc (Vézelay, cathedral Notre-Dame, Medieval City of Carcassonne, etc., all of which are nowadays on the World Heritage List).

other similar sites? Can I start a credible description of its value as a set of attributes?

Second, we have the idea of categorizing a monument, site, or cultural landscape by type of component for the harmonization and consistency of the description. The goal here is to give a complete set of what makes the property and what expresses its value in all dimensions: architectural, urban, technical, decorative, but also the associated natural components as well as its intangible associated value. Such a process involves the question of the scale of attributes. Of course, this depends on the size of the whole property or on its serial aspect, and that depends on the individual meaning associated with a given attribute; e.g., it could be a statue, a specific decoration, a complete building, or a group of buildings such as a district inside an historical city. The idea of a set of attributes making a whole also leads to a broader understanding of the property, in particular of the relationships between the attributes, in different ways: for the historical uses of the site, for interpretation of the landscape, for analysis of threats hampering the value expression, and so on.

Tangible attributes are complemented by intangible meanings. First of all, this may be considered as an additional meaning for a given attribute, linked to its specific design or to its individual history or symbolic value. Then, the additional intangible value may be seen as a complementary category related to the property as a whole. In this case, it constitutes a specific fact, which is not really related to a specific tangible attribute but to the entirety of the property, such as the history of the site, social uses, its memorial or spiritual role, etc. This offers a complementary set of elements that contribute to the understanding and value of the site. This is precisely what we call intangible attributes of the property seen as a whole. Of course, they are based on concrete and proven evidence such as documents, archives, and the like.

When we organize a nomination file or check its conformity with what is expected by the World Heritage Committee, we must first have a comprehensive description of the tangible attributes, because the *Convention* itself aims to protect tangible heritage through the recognition of a well-defined and limited property. This is precisely what is indicated to be done in the World Heritage format: ‘Description of the property’ (Chapter 2a from *Guidelines*, Annex No. 5). As we have seen, intangible meanings may come from a specific attribute or be linked to the entirety of the property; however, when it has real importance, its value as a whole passes and it becomes a complete intangible attribute, contributing significantly to the value of the site. Intangible attributes take up much of the next chapter of the format: ‘History and development’ (2b).

Summary two: The methodical inventory and rational description of the attributes, both tangible and intangible, constitute a fundamental first step in analysing the nominated property. This is a prerequisite for any in-depth assessment and OUV proposal.

A tool for analysing the quality and the consistency of the nominated property

A tangible attribute can be described precisely in physical terms, and be closely linked to the nominated property's origins and its uses. We must go beyond this first descriptive step and enter into an attribute evaluation process with a clear methodology. This is established through the *Operational Guidelines* as a succession of statements on authenticity, integrity, comparative analysis and management, particularly the conservation plan and the possible threats to the property and its attributes. This set of requirements must therefore lead to a succession of studies on the attributes and on the property as a whole, and they are found mainly in § 3 (Justification for Inscription) and § 4 (State of Conservation and Factors Affecting the Property) of the World Heritage nomination format. This set of arguments establishes the quality and the consistency of the nomination; it finally carries—or possibly not for evaluators—the justification for OUV.

We have already seen the close link between the concept of 'authenticity' and the genesis of 'attributes' as a reference term for heritage assessment and analysis of its value. There are two major facets of this relationship: First, the conformity of the attribute with the original form, the design, the materials and surface appearances; this also establishes a direct link with the state of conservation analysis and the possible plan for appropriate restoration works. Second, a set of associated intangible qualities establishes the objective and subjective characteristics of the attribute, linked with its conception time and historical uses. An extension of the authenticity concept linked to the analysis of attributes can be promoted here: the authenticity of the documentation and the credibility of the narrative are based on it.

Integrity is often presented as a complement to authenticity, but in line with analysis of the contribution of the attributes to the total value of a given site, it appears to be notably different. Attributes themselves must be sufficiently maintained over time and must be as intact as possible, at minimum to offer a significant remaining part. We must of course make a clear distinction between functional and non-functional sites; some

are used, or reused, by people to this day, and others are archaeological sites made up of ruined and abandoned attributes. The first bears the well-known concept of a living site; the second offers relic sites of civilizations that have definitively disappeared. Of course, when assessing attributes we must be aware of this distinction and analyse integrity appropriately.

A very important facet of integrity is the concept of property wholeness, in the sense of offering a sufficient number of attributes with enough diversity and strong characteristics to be remarkable and even exceptional in the World Heritage sense. This statement must be fully checked through comparative analysis. When property wholeness is well established, it also contributes to defining the property boundaries, so as to offer a sufficient number and a sufficient diversity of valuable attributes making the property clearly readable for visitors. This aspect of integrity may be presented by way of mapping of locations of physical attributes, with the possibly of strengthening the presentation through a Geographical Information System (GIS), with an associated database and interactive access to the documentation, point by point.

Assessing the integrity of a property must go beyond analysing the composition of its attributes, such as by static and punctual mapping of them. It should also pay attention to the relationships among attributes and between attributes and property settings. This brings us to other types of integrity analysis. The first is a visual sense, even if it the landscape is not a cultural one; it means heritage in context, especially inside its surroundings. The expression of the value of the property is both a valuable point for fully expressing the OUV of the property, and a sensitive point in the sense of possible threats versus regulations on the property and its buffer zone. The second type of structural integrity, based on the relationships between attributes, is devoted to the functionality of the site, in order to understand what the functions and the social uses were. This should apply to any type of property, even archaeological, but it sometimes reaches a dynamic aspect for living sites still in use and consistent with their original purpose (authenticity of use).

Finally, the set of attributes both tangible and intangible should be used as a methodological tool to establish a comparative analysis. Such a tool would make it possible to perform precise comparisons with other similar properties through objective facts such as numbers, dimensions, state of conservation and the narrative of associated meanings.

Summary three: A well-established set of attributes provides an effective tool for analysing integrity and authenticity. It should contribute to the methodology of comparative analysis of similar properties. Assessment should be based on the state of conservation of the property and resulting programs, such as a threat survey, the conservation plan and the valorisation plan.

Conclusion: Concept of the use of attributes and expression of OUV

The use of attributes is both linked to description of a property and to the different facets of the methodology used to assess the property. Attributes express the physical and abstract characteristics of the heritage site, by the way of tangible and intangible attributes, leading to present arguments for a brief synthesis of meanings and finally to express an OUV proposal, including the choice and the justification of criteria following the grid of the *Operational Guidelines* § 77.

Associated with tangible attributes, intangible attributes first express the history of the site, the creativity of its erection and the way of life of its inhabitants. The heritage property offers as key testimony to the material history of a community, showing what gives it meaning, specificity and value. This constitutes a rational understanding of the facts of the past directly associated with the site.

The second series of facts expressed by the site and its constitutive combination of tangible and intangible attributes may be an emblematic symbolic or commemorative role. Thus, it illustrates the social representations and beliefs associated with the site and its history until today.

All these possibilities must lead to proposing a precise contribution to OUV and to choose the most appropriate criteria for expressing it. Reciprocally, OUV is supported and expressed by a series of attributes both tangible and intangible. Narratives on value must involve proposing a coherent and solid ensemble of arguments with a comprehensive network of relationships between the expression of OUV, the criteria, and the valuable attributes, all clearly identified, described and supported by appropriate comparative analysis with similar properties.

All six cultural criteria of the World Heritage format are well known². We have to remember that to be used, one or more of the first five criteria must be directly supported by tangible attributes clearly described and analysed in the dossier. To do this with relevance, the property must have precise attributes that effectively express the philosophy of value defined by each criterion. In addition, the mentioned attributes both have to demonstrate their exceptional characteristics and reach universal significance.

To apply criterion (vi) to a nominated property, the property must be ‘associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance’ (*Operational Guidelines* § 77). These associated significances are typically what we call the intangible attributes of the property. To use criterion (vi) there are, however, two important requirements: the first is to use it in conjunction with the other criteria based on tangible attributes³; the second is to demonstrate OUV in intangible terms as an exceptional characteristic of the property as a whole.

Summary four: The expression of the OUV of a cultural property under at least one of the six criteria relies on a well-analysed set of tangible and intangible attributes. The tangible attributes and their associated characteristics must be exceptional, satisfying criteria (i) to (v), and the intangible attributes, independently providing exceptional and universal meanings, may satisfy criteria (vi).

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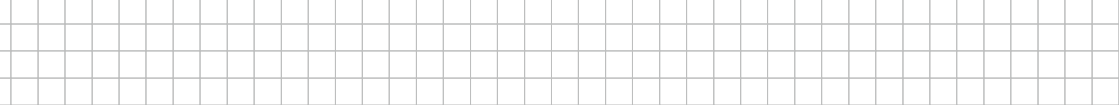
² Even though the criteria are closely linked to the concept of attributes, we do not intend to present or discuss them systematically. Instead, please consult the cited *Operational Guidelines* § 77 and *Preparing World Heritage Nominations*.

³ This point is not entirely an obligation, but a strong recommendation: ‘The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria’; on the other hand, we can observe on the List a short set of properties listed using only criterion (vi) (exactly twelve, 2019), but the World Heritage Committee always underlines the exceptionality of such listings, and in general they were included due to a particular decision of the Committee following notable debates.

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Thoughts on the Word “Attribute” Used in the Conservation Practices for World Heritage Sites



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1. Before starting the discussion on the practical issues in heritage conservation among experts gathered from different linguistic backgrounds

The word “attribute,” *zokusei* in Japanese, was brought into our heritage practice field together with the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*. It is not only a case of using that one word, “attribute” -- there are a number of such words that are increasingly being used in the work of the World Heritage system done in English, such as the preparation of nomination dossiers or reports on the state of conservation.

Since the author is working on the boundary bridging Japan and abroad, she is experiencing difficulties regarding how the technical terms created in different cultural and linguistic contexts are applied to the practical work in Japan. One of those experiences is in regard to discussions on the word “authenticity.” Authenticity is a word which carries much deeper historical and cultural background references than the more common generic word “attribute.” In the case of the discussion on authenticity, it tended to be rather monopolized by those who use this word in their native language, disproportionately reflecting its history of usage in Europe, and the discussion left out people like us who come from other cultural backgrounds.

There were people who said that there is no such word, “authenticity,” among the Japanese who were involved in the discussion on authenticity at the time of the 1994 Nara Conference on Authenticity. Does this mean that there is no concept of authenticity in Japan? Is this true? The author doesn’t think so. For any society, even those societies at primitive stages of history, the act of certifying the legitimacy of things or actions -- that is, the concept of authentication or authenticating -- is essential for the administration of any society. Therefore the concept and the word must exist in any place, as is the case in Japan.

To move the discussion properly on the practical issues getting over the differences of linguistic backgrounds, it is important to make the discussion-table context clear by defining what the term is actually targeting. It is okay if the targeted actions are already being implemented in the actual work in each cultural or linguistic area. If not, there are risks that impractical discussion-table discussions may take place depending on each person’s own arbitrary understanding.

In 1994 at the Nara Conference on Authenticity, we redefined the word “authenticity” to find a way to use the word and its targeted actions as a sharable and useful process for heritage conservation, as follows:

10. Authenticity, considered in this way and affirmed in the Charter of Venice, appears as the essential qualifying factor concerning values. The understanding of authenticity plays a fundamental role in all scientific studies of the cultural heritage, in conservation and restoration planning, as well as within the inscription procedures used for the World Heritage Convention and other cultural heritage inventories.

Thus the word became applicable to any cultural context. The question is now about the word “attribute.” How should we handle it?

2. Discussion on the word “attribute,” or *zokusei* in Japanese

Different from the word “authenticity,” “attribute” is not a word representing some concept by itself. It is a word usable only attached to something. It is a word to extract elements cut out from things to understand or analyze. Actually in the practices of World Heritage work, the word is used everywhere from the description of OUV, authenticity and integrity, and indicators for comparative analyses to the actual targets for practical conservation.

Regarding the word “*zokusei*” in Japanese, the author understands that this term was created for English translation of the word “attribute” in the philosophy study field in the 19th century, and it carries the same range of meaning that English dictionaries indicate, referring to “characteristics” in normal usage.

Then what is it that we are trying to discuss by using the word “attribute?” How are the things that this word indicates used in the practice of each country of experts who are joining this discussion? As in the case of “authenticity,” there is no way to deepen the understanding and integrate its meaning into real work until we find a proper place that is applicable in our own system of heritage conservation for which its effectiveness has already been proven and implemented. It stays only in the theoretical framework when we deal with things only in the World Heritage system, usually separated from the domestic systems of individual countries. It seems that the discussion on attributes in Japan stays in that stage.

In Japan the use of this word started when developing the statements of OUV for the preparation of nomination dossiers. In particular for the preparation of serial nominations, it started to call out the aspects subdivided from OUV. It was thought useful to strengthen the ground of serial nominations by matching each component of the serial nomination to the subdivided elements of OUV so as to explain their necessity as components, that

is to say for the proof of integrity. Thus the Japanese understanding of the word was for the extracted aspects of OUV, and is a collection of fragments of yet abstract value descriptions.

On the other hand in the process of World Heritage evaluation, to improve the conservation of the World Heritage sites which is becoming more and more complicated both in values and actual conditions in proportion to the increasing number of serial nominations, ICOMOS started to list up the things to be protected in the actual conservation practices under the term of attributes. Here the attributes are not the subdivided and yet abstract aspects of values as we had understood in Japan, but attributes recognized as the tangible and intangible elements or bodies of evidence that convey OUV. This is the cause of the current confusion on this word in Japan.

3. The way of use of the word “attribute” in the World Heritage system

The resource manual on nomination “*Preparing World Heritage Nominations (Second edition)*” prepared by the Advisory Bodies explains the attributes as follows:

Attributes are aspects of a property which are associated with or express the Outstanding Universal Value. Attributes can be tangible or intangible¹.

Another document prepared by ICOMOS explains the attributes as follows:

Attributes are physical elements, and tangible or intangible aspects or processes of the property that make manifest OUV².

Earlier than these uses of the word “attribute,” the *Nara Document on Authenticity* used the wording “information sources” for the similar meaning. The texts of the *Nara Document* were inserted almost as they were with very minor modifications into the main paragraphs of the section on authenticity of the *Operational Guidelines*. The paragraphs that explain the use and definition of the term “information sources” in the *Operational Guidelines* are:

¹ UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN. (2011). *Preparing World Heritage Nominations (Second edition)*, p. 31.

² Luisa De Marco. (2013, September). *Managing World Heritage Properties: the role of Statements of Outstanding Universal Value and attributes*. Paper presented at ICOMOS, Meeting of the Mediterranean European Focal Points for World Heritage, Florence, Italy.

80. *The ability to understand the value attributed to the heritage depends on the degree to which information sources about this value may be understood as credible or truthful. Knowledge and understanding of these sources of information, in relation to original and subsequent characteristics of the cultural heritage, and their meaning as accumulated over time, are the requisite bases for assessing all aspects of authenticity.*

84. *The use of all these sources permits elaboration of the specific artistic, historic, social, and scientific dimensions of the cultural heritage being examined. "Information sources" are defined as all physical, written, oral, and figurative sources, which make it possible to know the nature, specificities, meaning, and history of the cultural heritage.*

Whatever words are used, the exact identification of targets of conservation becomes more important for the preparation of management plans or for the processes of HIA to structure the scope of work more clearly and more strategically.

4. Finding a process in Japan equivalent to the usage of attributes for the World Heritage evaluation processes, attributes as tangible and intangible elements or processes that convey values

Well, for us Japanese, since the definition of the term and the grounds for its necessity in our conservation practices have become clear, we just adjust our work by introducing it as appropriate, although it would be best if we were able to find equivalent processes in our existing system. It is not a matter of how to name it.

So then let's find out whether or not we have been practicing the process of using the word "attribute" defined as tangible and intangible elements or processes that convey values.

For those who work in countries of European-origin language, it will not be difficult to search for the meaning of the word directly. It is our disadvantage that we can't do a simple search in the same way. However unfortunately for us, since the official working languages of the *World Heritage Convention* are English and French, we have to adjust ourselves to the situation. What we can do is to be ready for debates by clearly defining the discussion table context.

As for the answer to the question whether or not we have the equivalent process in our existing system, through my actual experiences as well as through my search in the existing documents such as guidelines and manuals, I haven't been able to find an exactly matching wording or process yet. One reason behind this is that our modern conservation practice has been developed around the modern concept weighted toward objectiveness and scientific rationale, that is the authenticity of material. Except for the category of pure intangible heritage which was introduced just after the Second World War, material conservation has been the fundamental policy for tangible cultural properties both in movable and immovable properties. It was not necessary to pursue the relationship between abstract values and experienceable expressions (tangible or intangible) as evidence of those values to be protected for practical conservation – those that are the attributes or information sources if we define them as such.

However, the situation is changing also in Japan. In 1994, the same year when the expert meeting on the “Global Strategy” and thematic studies for a representative World Heritage List and the Nara Conference on Authenticity took place, a subcommittee of the Council for Cultural Affairs of Japan recommended that the future direction of cultural heritage policy should promote a comprehensive and integrated approach to heritage going beyond existing small categories of properties, grasping them in the wider landscape setting. In 2004 a new category of cultural landscapes of people's livelihoods such as agricultural or industrial landscapes was introduced. In 2008 a project was started to encourage municipalities to establish “Basic Schemes for Historic and Cultural Properties” at the municipal level.

As the latest move, by the revision of the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties in 2018, the law introduced a new provision of the legal basis for municipal-level plans for the recognition (cultural resource mapping), conservation and utilization of heritage aiming at their incorporation into the wider local plans. Now local governments are preparing their local integrated management plans which need innovative approaches to grasp the unique local identity values beyond material conservation.

Through the introduction of living landscape concepts as well as the promotion of an integrated approach to heritage by narrating the value beyond classical heritage categories and bridging the separated physical properties as serial, we are facing a similar necessity like that in the World Heritage process, to establish methodologies to find what we are to protect in actual conservation practices as professionals. If it is not material to

protect and we can't freeze the existing condition as in the case of single arts, buildings or archaeological sites, what are we protecting? What do we need for the management of agricultural landscapes whose nature is changing constantly, for example? Also, for example, what about daily traditional costumes as intangible heritage? The questions are endless.

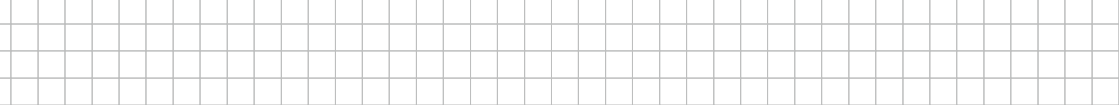
5. Closing the paper: Where we are now and where are we going?

The confusion among Japanese on the understanding of the word “attribute” resulted from the way of application of the word in a way different from the uses by ICOMOS: attributes as aspects subdivided from values, as we had understood them, vs. attributes as external elements that convey values, as the World Heritage system defined them.

However, such a difference will not matter so much, since anyway the brainstorming work to establish the description of OUV gave us interesting chances in a catalytic manner regarding how to describe values with more persuasive power to involve wider audiences beyond the concept of simple material conservation in an integrated manner linking tangible and intangible manifestations of our culture to the surrounding nature.

Just as for the use of the word “attribute” in Japan, what we have to do now is just to change the way of using the word to the same way that the World Heritage system uses it. It is just a translation issue. It may be more important for us to integrate our international experiences into our existing domestic system, otherwise any system imported from abroad will stay only at the level of theories.

The challenge will be for these positions to keep step with each other in a complementary way.



Attributes in World Heritage Nomination Dossier



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Attributes, used to refer to relevant aspects of evaluating authenticity, were first introduced in the 2005 version of the *Operational Guidelines*. In terms of completeness and heritage boundaries, attributes are used to refer to heritage-related components. In the statement about natural heritage, the *Operational Guidelines* states that “*In the case of a natural property the account should deal with important physical attributes, geology, habitats, species and population size, and other significant ecological features and processes.*”¹ This statement continued until the document’s 2019 edition. Specifically, paragraph 100 of the 2019 version of the *Operational Guidelines* says:

“*For properties nominated under criteria (i) - (vi), boundaries should be drawn to include all those areas and attributes which are a direct tangible expression of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, as well as those areas which in the light of future research possibilities, offer potential to contribute to and enhance such understanding.*”²

From the above content, attributes can be referred to as the second-level *existence* constituting the heritage. This *existence* may be material or immaterial. In recent years, some States Parties’ nomination dossiers have used attributes as a method of highlighting the value. For example, the *20th-Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* nominated by the United States of America was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2019. This was a relatively complex series of applications that included multiple architectural works. The application documents stated that this project complies with criterion (ii) specified in the *Operational Guidelines*: “*To exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time, or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture.*”³ The nomination dossier divides this value standard into three attributes, and each attribute is further split into three aspects:

“*Attribute 1: Creation of an architecture responsive to functional and emotional needs through geometric abstraction and spatial manipulation.*

1A. *Spatial continuity expressed through the open plan and blurred transitions between interior and exterior spaces*

¹ World Heritage Centre. (2005). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, Paris: UNESCO, Annex 5

² World Heritage Centre. (2019). *Operational Guidelines, for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, Paris: UNESCO, paragraph 100

³ 1496rev-2322-Nomination Text-en.pdf, p.194

1B. Dynamic forms that employ innovative structural methods and inventive use of new materials and technologies

1C. The richness of experience created through contrast and carefully composed paths of movement”⁴

“Attribute 2: Design inspired by nature’s forms and principles

2A. Integral relationship with nature

2B. Unity of design expressed in the integration of the parts to the whole

2C. Intrinsic qualities of materials expressed”⁵

“Attribute 3: Architecture responsive to an evolving American experience

3A. Changing modes of living are addressed

3B. The primacy of the individual and individualized expression

3C. Transforming inspirations from other places and cultures”⁶

When evaluating this nomination, ICOMOS affirmed the value statement:

“ICOMOS considers that the nomination dossier provides abundant information on the aspects mentioned to justify criterion (ii), especially the influence of the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright in his own and in other countries. The table on pages 196-197 of the nomination dossier clearly explains the contribution of each of the components of the serial property to criterion (ii) on the basis of the three attributes proposed by the State Party and justifies the composition of the series.”⁷

The dossier of the *20th-Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* corresponds to the various components of the heritage and the content of the three attributes (Table 1):

⁴ 1496rev-2322-Nomination Text-en.pdf, p. 194

⁵ 1496rev-2322-Nomination Text-en.pdf, p. 194

⁶ 1496rev-2322-Nomination Text-en.pdf, p. 195

⁷ 1496rev-ICOMOS-2322-en, p. 29

Table 1: Attributes of the 20th-Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright

SERIAL COMPONENT	ATTRIBUTE 1: Creation of an architecture responsive to functional and emotional needs through geometric abstraction and spatial manipulation			ATTRIBUTE 2: Design inspired by nature's forms and principles		
	1A. Spatial continuity expressed through the open plan and blurred transitions between interior and exterior spaces	1B. Dynamic forms that employ innovative structural methods and an inventive use of new materials	1C. Richness of experience created through contrast and carefully composed paths of movement	2a. Integral relationship with nature	2B. Unity of design expressed in integration of the parts to the whole	2c. Intrinsic qualities of materials expressed
UNITY TEMPLE		Widely influential for abstract cubic form and early use of reinforced concrete	Circulation reveals contrasts between light/dark, solid/void, compression/release		Its exterior cubic form is reinforced on the interior by thin oak strips that weave together cubic volumes, piers, balconies, and ceiling through continuous and dynamic patterns while amber art glass skylights wash the interior unifying the whole	Nature of concrete expressed in early example of beton brut
FREDERICK C. ROBBE HOUSE	Open plan changed domestic architecture	Dramatic roof cantilever creates floating effect	Compression/release as one ascends from narrow entry to expansive main floor	The quintessential "Prairie house" is a metaphor for horizontality of Midwest landscape	Growing out of its rectilinear form, the horizontal theme continues in the interior through bands of art glass doors, an elongated open plan, and interior trim all which are reinforced by the details of custom furnishings and fixtures	
TALIESIN	Rooms extend out to gardens and terraces		Meandering form incorporating thresholds, gardens and vistas creates meaningful experience of place	Consummate example of organic connection to the landscape		Rustic stone work echoes its natural state
HOLLYHOCK HOUSE	Lawns, courtyards, rooftops are part of living space		Composed paths of movement lead inside and out, up and down, and through open and closed, and light and dark spaces		Integral ornament based on stylized hollyhock unites building, interior decoration and landscape elements	
FALLINGWATER	Continuity of materials expressed: stone floors carried out to terraces, exterior concrete and stone walls continue inside	Reinforced concrete for cantilevers stretched capacity of technology	A visceral experience of nature and architecture as one	The waterfall inspired the design	A limited palette of materials, color, and design motifs, derived from natural features at the site and reiterated throughout, creates an unprecedented example of unified design	Undressed masonry bid to imitate natural stone, plasticity of concrete and color of steel predominate
HERBERT AND KATHERINE JACOBS HOUSE	Dramatic spatial continuity achieved through use of modest materials and on a small scale		Dramatic contrast between compact entry and large volume of living room, expansive garden	House positioned to take maximum advantage of suburban garden, contrasting with traditional site plan	A study in elimination and simplicity, in which all the parts—siting, form, spatial arrangement, and materials work in unity to serve the whole—a modest, yet artistic home	Simply finished wood and undorned brick used as interior wall finish
TALIESIN WEST	Rooms open out on and extend into desert environment		Power of place revealed through choreographed processional through space	As much a work of landscape architecture as it is architecture		Innovative desert masonry expresses texture, color, and materiality of desert environs
SOLOMON R. GUGENHEIM MUSEUM		Interior cantilevered spiral ramps expressed in exterior form	Architecture creates extraordinary emotional response and a new museum experience		Circle motif expressed in spiral form, internal ramp and skylight	Plasticity of concrete expressed in sculptural form

☒ Primary Attribute

☐ Secondary Attribute

☐ Other Attribute

This tabular method of expression makes it easier for people to understand the relationship between value and the components that make up the heritage. It is also based on the aspects involved in the attributes in a comparative study. Based on such a comparative study, the conclusion in the nomination dossier argues that:

*"Although a number of other modern works of architecture and architectural philosophies exhibit to some degree one or more of the attributes that characterize the global interchange of ideas and influence of The 20th-Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, none did so in a way that incorporated Wright's organic principles in all three critical attributes, and none did so with the same effect and influence, and over such a sustained period of time."*⁸

⁸ 1496rev-2322-Nomination Text-en.pdf, p. 244

ATTRIBUTE 3: Architecture responsive to an evolving American experience			Component's influence on the development of architecture	SERIAL COMPONENT
3A. Changing modes of living are addressed	3B. Primacy of the individual and individualized expression	3C. Transforming inspirations from other places and cultures		
	Modern form for the vernacular meeting house: the individual's experience central to the design		Icon of Modern Movement, Wasmuth portfolio and later Wendingen edition impacted early Dutch and German modernism: use of Cubist form seen in dissolving planes and the role of perception; approach to urban setting (or shielding from it) characterizes public and institutional buildings of the 1960s and 1970s.	UNITY TEMPLE
Heating technology and informality support use of the open plan		Japanese influence (deep eaves, low hipped roof) employed in support of horizontal landscape metaphor	Icon of Modern Movement, Wasmuth portfolio and later Wendingen edition impacted early Dutch and German modernism: use of shifting planes, bands of windows, and the role of perception; inspired Walter Gropius (Haus Sommerfeld) and Mies van der Rohe (Barcelona Pavilion).	FREDERICK C. ROBBE HOUSE
An integrated setting for living and working		Western and Nonwestern influences (Japan and Italy) are synthesized into a new architecture	Consummate example of organic architecture: Elimination of bilateral symmetry inspired Mies van der Rohe, Rudolf Schindler, Richard Neutra, and Werner Moser who all visited or apprenticed with Wright while there.	TALIESIN
	Outstanding expression of a highly personalized dwelling	A model for the modern interpretation of forms from indigenous cultures	Modern alternative to Art Deco exoticism, Poetic expression helps establish California modernism; inspired Rudolf Schindler, Richard Neutra, and Harwell Hamilton Harris who all visited or worked on structure under Wright.	HOLLYHOCK HOUSE
	A unique house tailored to the interests and activities of its owner.	American response to International Style	Icon of Modern Movement epitomized integration of landscape with architectural design and blurring between interior and exterior spaces; inspired Alvar Aalto (Villa Mairea) and Paul Rudolph (Bass Residence).	FALLINGWATER
Prototype for modest, detached, servant-less, single-family suburban houses	The Usonian concept fostered a life of artistic individuality for the middle class	Japanese (modular planning) and Korean (radiant heating) influences transformed into an American suburban form	Modern prototype for modest single-family house. Introduced ideas of the "great room" and American "ranch" style; inspired post-war architectural style of Joseph Eichler and Alfred Levitt, and Jern Utzon (personal home, Hellebæk, Denmark).	HERBERT AND KATHERINE JACOBS HOUSE
		Indigenous American influences are a continuous theme	Prototype for use of rustic materials in modern architecture. Modernism no longer seen as based on technology, rubble stone introduced as acceptable material for modern building, influenced Alvar Aalto (personal studio), Paolo Soleri (Arcesenti), and Sidney Press (Coramandel Estate, Moundings, South Africa).	TALIESIN WEST
Prototype of art museum where the building itself is an art object			Icon of Modern Movement. Made the museum a destination in itself, its design a foil for the collection. It also made viewing art a communal adventure.	SOLOMON R. GUGENHEIM MUSEUM

The expression of attributes in *the 20th-Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* declaration text focuses on the value level.

In contrast, the use of attributes in the “Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan” nominated by Japan is more focused on the expression of heritage morphological characteristics⁹.

The attributes in the nomination dossier for “Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan” are associated with multiple criteria at the same time, and more reflect the characteristics of the nominated object rather than the content of the criteria relating to the value (Table 2). This is completely different from the nomination dossier of *the 20th-Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright*.

⁹ 1593-2284-Nomination Text-en, p. 191

Table 2: Attributes of Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan

Attributes	Criterion (iii) = Cultural tradition (hierarchical burial system)	Criterion (iv) = types, typology (Architectural achievement of earthen monuments)
Attribute a) <i>A wide range of types of mounded tombs grouped together</i>	The richest kofun group on the archipelago in terms of variety of the component tombs ↓ An expression of the power structure of the rulership's center, which was at the top of the hierarchy of local powers across the archipelago.	A large-scale grouping incorporating a wide range of types ↓ An example of kofun group structure, as found in many parts of the archipelago.
Attribute b) <i>Four standardized plan types</i>	Four mound plan types corresponding to the hierarchical order of mound size ↓ An expression of power structure through the order of mound types	Having a wide range of shapes and sizes representative of the height of the Kofun period ↓ Examples of kofun of all four types; Geometric mound shapes, especially the keyhole-shaped examples; High capability of designing, construction and labor management
Attribute c) <i>Evidence of elaborate and distinctive funerary rituals</i>	Testimony as to how ancient funerary rituals were performed, as well as presenting a variety of styles of burial facilities ↓ A demonstration of power structure through the hierarchical order of burial facilities	Kofun decorated with <i>haniwa</i> and <i>fukiishi</i> and designed as a stage for funerary rituals ↓ Examples of kofun with distinctive appearance as stage for funerary rituals

However, the attributes of the English Lake District nominate by Britain and inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2017, are more closely related to the components of the heritage in some cases, such as: “*They are not defined by a single location and may occur in different areas of the National Park. They have a distinct and relatively homogenous composition and pattern of physical and cultural attributes – including geology, landform, hydrology, land cover/ecological habitats and historical land use.*”¹⁰;

¹⁰ 422rev-2171-Nomination Text-en, p. 67

“Grasmere displays a broad combination of attributes including farming, villas, planned landscape, National Trust property and is the key landscape associated with William Wordsworth.”¹¹

The pictures of “the English Lake District” express the meaning of such attributes (Figures 1-15):

EXAMPLES OF KEY ATTRIBUTES: As shown on the Windermere Valley North illustrative map



Figure 1: Lamb Pasture Romano-British farmstead



Figure 2: Bryant’s Gill early medieval settlement (spindle whorls found during excavation)



Figure 3: Kentmere Hall (pele tower)

¹¹ 422rev-2171-Nomination Text-en, p. 78



Figure 4: Calgarth Hall



Figure 5: Troutbeck village



Figure 6: Townend, Troutbeck (owned by National Trust)



Figure 7: Low Sadghyll

EXAMPLES OF KEY ATTRIBUTES: As shown on the Windermere Valley South illustrative map

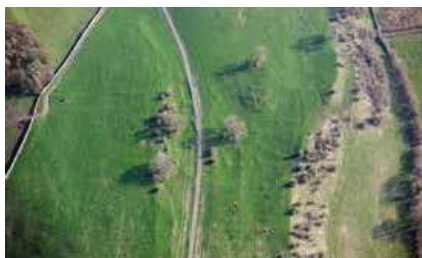


Figure 8: Cunswick Hall Romano-British settlement



Figure 9: Cowmire Hall



Figure 10: Hampsfield Hall



Figure 11: Hodge Hill Hall, Cartmel Fell



Figure 12: Plumgarths Cottages



Figure 13: Belle Isle house



Figure 14: Storrs Hall



Figure 15: Broughton Lodge

Table 3: The contribution of the Windermere Valley to the cultural landscape themes identified













































WINDERMERE		
THEME	COMPONENTS OF ATTRIBUTES	SIGNIFICANCE
Continuity of traditional agro-pastoralism and local industry in a spectacular mountain landscape	Extraordinary beauty and harmony	
	Evidence of pre-medieval settlement and agriculture	
	Distinctive early field system	
	Medieval buildings (e.g. churches, pele towers and early farmhouses)	
	16th/17th century farmhouses	
	Herdwick flocks	
	Rough Fell flocks	
	Swaledale flocks	
	Common land	
	Shepherds' meets/shows and traditional sports	
	Woodland industries	
	Mining/Quarrying	
	Water-powered industry	
	Market towns	
Discovery and appreciation of a rich cultural landscape	Viewing stations	
	Villas	
	Designed landscape	
	Early tourist infrastructure	
	Residences and burial places of significant writers and poets	None
	Key literary associations with landscape	
	Key artistic associations with landscape	
	Key associations with climbing and the outdoor movement	
Development of a model for protecting cultural landscape	Opportunities for quiet enjoyment and spiritual refreshment	
	Conservation movement	
	National Trust ownership (inalienable land)	
	National Trust covenanted land	
	Other Protective Trusts and ownership including National Park Authority	

Table 4: The contribution of the Ennerdale Valley to the cultural landscape themes identified

ENNERDALE		
THEME	COMPONENTS OF ATTRIBUTES	SIGNIFICANCE
Continuity of traditional agro-pastoralism and local industry in a spectacular mountain landscape	Extraordinary beauty and harmony	
	Evidence of pre-medieval settlement and agriculture	
	Distinctive early field system	
	Medieval buildings (e.g. churches, pele towers and early farmhouses)	
	16th/17th century farmhouses	None
	Herdwick flocks	
	Rough Fell flocks	None
	Swaledale flocks	
	Common land	
	Shepherds' meets/shows and traditional sports	
	Woodland industries	
	Mining/Quarrying	
	Water-powered industry	None
	Market towns	None
Discovery and appreciation of a rich cultural landscape	Viewing stations	None
	Villas	None
	Designed landscape	
	Early tourist infrastructure	None
	Residences and burial places of significant writers and poets	None
	Key literary associations with landscape	
	Key artistic associations with landscape	
	Key associations with climbing and the outdoor movement	
Development of a model for protecting cultural landscape	Opportunities for quiet enjoyment and spiritual refreshment	
	Conservation movement	
	National Trust ownership (inalienable land)	
	National Trust covenanted land	
	Other Protective Trusts and ownership including National Park Authority	None

From the above three cases, the writers of different nomination dossiers have differences in understanding, and use attributes that have appeared in the *Operational Guidelines* since 2005. However, the use of attributes as a whole does not affect the final result of nominations that do have OUV.

Here, the discussion of attributes derives from the explanation of OUV, especially the description of criteria; how to break through the limitations of cultural background; how to form a logical relationship that is easy to understand; and how to improve the writing of nomination dossiers and effectively help readers (including Advisory Bodies and the World Heritage Committee members) understand the dossier's description of the OUV that the heritage site possesses.

According to the 2019 version of the *Operational Guidelines*:

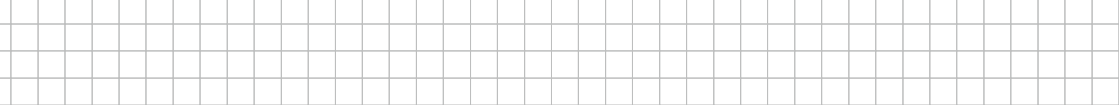
“Outstanding Universal Value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity. As such, the permanent protection of this heritage is of the highest importance to the international community as a whole. The Committee defines the criteria for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List.”¹²

Among the ten criteria connected to OUV, the last three related to the earth's evolutionary history of natural heritage, biodiversity, and habitats of important species are relatively scientific standards and can even be expressed in a quantitative way. However, the remaining seven criteria, whether they are related to the six cultural criteria or criterion (vii) on natural beauty, have a relatively strong subjective aspect. It presents obvious difficulties for judging these criteria. The criteria for World Heritage are universal and reflect the universal values of mankind, but culture and aesthetics are inherently diverse, and more often than not they reflect the tendency of individualization. Therefore, there is a gap between the universal value standard and the personalized cultural background and cultural expression. There is also a gap between the nomination dossier's story and the reader's cognition of it. Bridging this universal value standard and personalized heritage characteristics and the gap between the nomination dossier's expression and the reader's cognition is a problem that every nomination dossier needs to solve. This requires dossier's

¹² *Operational Guidelines*, 2019, paragraph 49

writers to establish a clear structural relationship that is easy for people of different cultural backgrounds to understand. In the above three cases, *the 20th-Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* used attributes to establish the value expression logic in the description of criteria, which makes it easier for readers to understand the expression of criterion (ii) in Wright's architectural works described by the dossier. The nomination dossier of *the 20th-Century Architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright* divided criterion (ii) into three attributes, then took each attribute and split it into three parts. Through this structural relationship, the physical remains of Wright's work establish the connection between architectural works and the abstract criterion (ii). This also makes readers focus on the three attributes or the nine parts under the three attributes even if they question the dossiers' justification, they will focus on some parts of the nine parts under the three attributes instead of question the whole expression of criteria (ii).

Improving the dossier's legibility, clearly and concisely expressing the value standards applicable to the heritage, and enabling readers of different cultural backgrounds to understand and agree that this justification under the criteria have always been the most challenging aspects in nominating a site for World Heritage List. However, the attributes that appeared in the *Operational Guidelines* in 2005 brought thoughts and improvements to the structure of dossiers' justifications, and this has helped to improve dossier quality.



Attributes and Outstanding Universal Value: The Cascades Female Factory – an Australian Convict Site



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Preamble

Properties are inscribed on the World Heritage List because the World Heritage Committee¹ determines that they have ‘Outstanding Universal Value’ (OUV) to all humanity². The OUV of a World Heritage Property relies on three foundations, namely:

- heritage values that meet one or more of the ten World Heritage criteria;
- meeting the conditions integrity and authenticity (the latter especially for cultural and mixed properties); and
- adequate statutory protection and management³.

All three foundational conditions must be met for a property to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, and all three must be maintained in order to conserve and transmit OUV to future generations – these are fundamental obligations of each State Party to the *World Heritage Convention*⁴. In fulfilling their respective roles to ensure and facilitate the conservation and transmission of OUV, States Parties, the World Heritage Committee and its Advisory Bodies, ICCROM⁵, ICOMOS⁶ and IUCN⁷ must therefore be able to identify and understand the ‘attributes’ of an inscribed property that contribute to its OUV. This is because it is the condition of those attributes that determines the property’s state of conservation. Attributes may be physical components of the property (such as buildings, landscape features or natural phenomena), features that transcend the property (such as its visual setting, view corridors or connections with other places), intangible elements (such as associated traditions, meanings or spiritual belief) or circumstances (such as physical condition, relationships, continuing activities or intactness of both tangible and intangible features).

At the time of inscription, it is usual for the World Heritage Committee to adopt a ‘Statement of Outstanding Universal Value’ (SOUV) that encapsulates the basis for World Heritage inscription. Over recent years, through the Periodic Reporting process, the

¹ The Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

² UNESCO World Heritage Centre, (2019). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, Section III

³ UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN. (2011). *Preparing World Heritage Nominations (Second edition)*.

⁴ UNESCO. (1972). *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (the World Heritage Convention)*. Article 5.

⁵ The International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property.

⁶ The International Council on Monuments and Sites.

⁷ The International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

Committee has progressively adopted a ‘Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value’ (RSOUV) for World Heritage properties that were inscribed prior to the requirement for a SOUV. The SOUV has become an important benchmark for evaluating the state of conservation of properties that are subject to further consideration through the processes of the *World Heritage Convention*, subsequent to their inscription⁸. This is because the SOUV provides a succinct summation of the rationale for World Heritage inscription and clear focus on the attributes that contribute to OUV; although other relevant information may also be found in related sources including, for example, the original World Heritage nomination dossier, the technical evaluations of ICOMOS and/or IUCN, and State Party documents such as management plans for the property. States Parties were invited to ‘map’ attributes and their relationship with OUV through the Second Periodic Reporting Cycle (2008 – 2015)⁹; however, in many cases the primary focus was directed at preparing RSOUVs rather than more-detailed mapping of attributes and values.

World Heritage properties do not exist in isolation, either physically or in a legal sense; typically they are also included within national and local heritage lists or registers, which may have their own heritage evaluation criteria and related provisions for statutory protection and management. In many cases there will be overlap between national or local heritage assessments and requirements and those of the *World Heritage Convention*. The same attributes of a heritage place may simultaneously contribute to OUV and meet criteria for heritage listing and protection at a national or local level. They may, therefore, be relevant to understanding reasons for heritage inscription or listing and for assessment of heritage impact, in accordance with the *Operational Guidelines to the World Heritage Convention* as well as in accordance with applicable national and local statutes and standards. Identification of ‘attributes’ may therefore have multiple purposes, across multiple levels of jurisdiction. In the case of impact assessment, identifying the nature and severity of change to significant attributes is a fundamental requirement of Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA).

Heritage Impact Assessment and the ICOMOS 2011 Guidance

HIA supports informed decision-making for cultural and natural heritage places. The

⁸ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2019). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, Section IV

⁹ Periodic Reporting is a key element of the monitoring process carried out in accordance with Article 29 of the *World Heritage Convention*; see: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/periodicreporting/>

concept of a separate assessment for heritage impacts is a relatively new sub-strand within broader environmental and other impact assessments, which have been part of statutory processes and project decision-making for many years. However, as processes for identification, protection and management of heritage have evolved, HIA has become a stand-alone process in many jurisdictions. The World Heritage Committee has been part of this evolving process since the 1980s, particularly through State Party obligations to notify the Committee of activities that may affect World Heritage properties¹⁰, and especially within the ‘state of conservation’ and ‘reactive monitoring’ processes, which seek to ensure that decision-making for World Heritage properties is founded on retention of OUV. The Committee has typically placed the onus on States Parties to ensure that HIAs are undertaken and that these are provided to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and Advisory Bodies for review, prior to irreversible decisions being taken.

As more and more cultural properties were progressively inscribed onto the World Heritage List during the 1990s and early 2000s, the role of the Committee and Advisory Bodies in evaluating the state of conservation and responding to specific development projects and threats to OUV increased. The effects were cumulative – arising from additional inscriptions, improved notification processes, and more active and well-informed members of civil society. ICOMOS, recognising the need for consistent and high-calibre information and decision-making, prepared the *ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties* in 2011¹¹. The ICOMOS Guidance has become an internationally accepted methodology for evaluating heritage impact for cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List. In 2019 and 2020 a collaboration between ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN, occurring through the World Heritage Leadership Program, is revising the ICOMOS Guidance and the *IUCN World Heritage advice note on Environmental Assessment*¹², with a view to producing a new integrated guideline for World Heritage impact assessment¹³.

One of the strengths of the ICOMOS Guidance is the simple underlying logic that provides a platform for values-based decision-making, which prioritises OUV. The steps are simple and follow an inherently logical sequence:

¹⁰ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2019). *Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, paragraph 172.

¹¹ ICOMOS. (2011). *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*. A publication of the International Council on Monuments and Sites. (ICOMOS), Paris, France, in collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

¹² See: <https://www.iucn.org/theme/world-heritage/resources/iucn-policies-world-heritage/environmental-assessment>.

¹³ See: <https://www.iccrom.org/section/world-heritage-leadership>.

- what are the attributes of the property that contribute to its OUV?
- what is the proposal?
- how will the proposal affect the attributes that contribute to OUV?
- are the impacts acceptable?
- are there alternatives which better conserve OUV?
- should the project proceed?
- if the project does proceed, what can be done to avoid, reduce or compensate for the impacts?

Understanding of attributes and relating them to both OUV and other heritage evaluations or citations is therefore a particularly important aspect of the HIA process.

Case Study: The Cascades Female Factory Historic Site, Tasmania, Australia ¹⁴

This paper presents one method that has been used to identify and consider attributes of a heritage place that is a component of an inscribed World Heritage Property.

The Cascades Female Factory (CFF) Historic Site is one of eleven sites that form the Australian Convict Sites UNESCO World Heritage Property ¹⁵. Together, the sites are an exemplar of the global phenomenon of colonial settlement through forced migration and tell an important story of Australia's convict history. From 1828 until 1853 the CFF accommodated, punished and aimed to reform convict women, and records the beginnings and continuation of segregated prisons, in which inmates of different class or gender were separated. The CFF is testament to the resilience, resourcefulness and survival of convict women, which is an important part of the female convict story. After the transportation of convicts to Tasmania ceased in 1853, the CFF continued to be used as a prison, and later as a depot for a range of welfare activities. Most of the buildings were demolished during the twentieth century, (Figure 1) so that today the site comprises perimeter walls enclosing three yards, a single remnant cottage, and extensive archaeological remains (Figure 2).

¹⁴ The content of this section of the paper is derived from: Mackay Strategic Pty Ltd, (2019), Cascades Female Factory History and Interpretation Centre Heritage Impact Assessment. Prepared for the Port Arthur Historic Sites Management Authority: http://epbnotices.environment.gov.au/_entity/annotation/7f1b1bb0-d3aa-ea11-a182-005056842ad1/a71d58ad-4cba-48b6-8dab-f3091fc31cd5?t=1595654423554.

¹⁵ See: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1306/>.

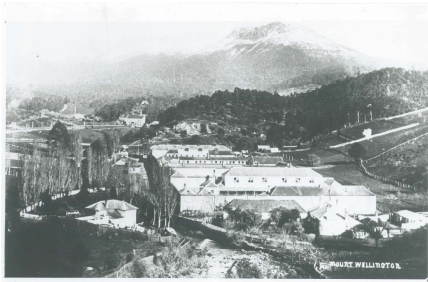


Figure 1: Historic photograph of Cascades Female Factory, with Mount Wellington¹⁶.



Figure 2: Cascades Female Factory, Hobart¹⁷.

At the time of inscription, the World Heritage Committee decision requested (among other matters) that consideration be given to removing the ‘anachronistic structures or constructions’, ‘consolidating the perimeter walls’ and that the development or rehabilitation of visitor facilities should respect the visual integrity and landscape values. In response to that decision, the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority has proposed the construction of a new ‘History and Interpretation Centre’ (HIC) within one of the CFF yards, replacing a modern, anachronistic factory building.

As a result of previous archaeological investigations, the CFF is known to contain extensive sub-surface archaeological features, including structural remains and occupation deposits. These include convict-era foundations of a constables’ apartment, separate apartments (where convicts were incarcerated in isolation), yard surfaces, and drains. A section of footings from the separate apartments and remains of a stone-capped drain are currently exposed and presented to visitors. These archaeological features are integral to the heritage significance of the CFF and are physical attributes that contribute to the OUV of the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property. The HIC is proposed to be constructed over the archaeological remains of one of two former separate apartment blocks and part of the constables’ apartment building.

Heritage Values and Cultural Significance Matrix

The CFF is not only part of the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property, but

¹⁶ All but one of the CFF buildings were demolished in the twentieth century. (Photo: Female Factory, Cascades, with Mount Wellington in background. Tasmanian Archives: NS273/1/42).

¹⁷ CFF is one of the eleven places that comprise the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property. The main physical attributes of the site are enclosing perimeter walls and archaeological remains. (Photo: Richard Mackay 2019).

is also included on Australia's National Heritage List¹⁸, the (State-level) Tasmanian Heritage Register¹⁹ and is a 'heritage place' that is protected at the local level through the 'Historic Heritage Code' of the *Hobart Interim Planning Scheme 2015*. Therefore, in assessing the 'heritage impact' of the proposed HIC, it was necessary to consider not only attributes of the place that contribute to OUV, but also national, state and local heritage values. Moreover, in order to assist with well-informed decision-making with respect to the proposed development, it was also necessary to identify those attributes that might be affected by the proposal rather than every attribute that is related to every heritage value.

The method used in assessing the heritage impact of the CFF HIC included preparation of a matrix that identifies those attributes and values of the CFF which could potentially be affected and which therefore need to be assessed and considered as part of the evaluation process.

The cultural heritage values of the CFF vest in both physical characteristics and intangible elements—such as its historical significance and community attachment. There are multiple listing citations, statements of significance and assessments of heritage value for the CFF. Those of relevance to the HIC were determined to be the SOUV for the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property²⁰, the Australian National Heritage List 'Summary Statement of Significance and Official Values'²¹, the Tasmanian Heritage Register 'Official Summary Statement of Heritage Values'²² and the 'Summary Statement of Significance' from the relevant site management document: the *Cascades Female Factory Conservation Management Plan*²³.

Owing to different jurisdictional requirements, the citations do not apply a uniform set of criteria, but there is considerable overlap. While some attributes could possibly be affected by the HIC, others, by their very nature, or the nature and/or location of the proposed works, cannot be affected. The following sets of attributes were considered collectively in a summary matrix: historic, aesthetic, scientific/research, social, technical, significant people and associations, representativeness, rarity and Indigenous. Excerpts

¹⁸ The National Heritage List is established by the Australian *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*; see: <https://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national-heritage-list>

¹⁹ The Tasmanian Heritage Register is established by the *Historic Cultural Heritage Act 1995*; see: <https://heritage.tas.gov.au/heritage-listed-places/what-is-the-register>.

²⁰ See: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1306/>.

²¹ See: <https://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/cascade-female-factory>.

²² See: <https://heritage.tas.gov.au/heritage-listed-places/search-the-register>.

²³ Lovell Chen. (2007). *Cascades Female Factory South Hobart – Conservation Management Plan*. Revised and updated 2016. Copy held by Port Arthur Historic Sites Management Authority: <https://portarthur.org.au/about-us/>

were cited for each of these sets of attributes, focusing on attributes that could potentially be affected by the HIC Project. This approach, of using the actual words of the SOUV (or other citations), follows the pioneering work of Jon Day in ‘breaking down’ the OUV of Australia’s Great Barrier Reef to assist with management and reporting²⁴. For the purposes of this case study, only the section relating to ‘historic’ values is presented, as an example, in the chart (Table 1) below.

Table 1: Historic Values and attributes Matrix for the Cascades Female Factory History and Interpretation Centre²⁵.

Historic Values	Criteria	Excerpts from citations
Australian Convict Sites: World Heritage Property Statement of Outstanding Universal Value	Criterion (iv) <i>To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history</i>	The Australian convict sites constitute an outstanding example of the way in which conventional forced labour and national prison systems were transformed, in major European nations in the 18th and 19th centuries, into a system of deportation and forced labour forming part of the British Empire’s vast colonial project. They illustrate the variety of the creation of penal colonies to serve the many material needs created by the development of a new territory. They bear witness to a penitentiary system which had many objectives, ranging from severe punishment used as a deterrent to forced labour for men, women and children, and the rehabilitation of the convicts through labour and discipline.
		Conclusion: These attributes and values would not be affected by the HIC Project.

²⁴ Jon Day. (2015). *Understanding your Outstanding Universal Value. How to break down OUV to more effectively manage and report on your World Heritage site.* Side event presentation, 39th Session World Heritage Committee, Bonn, presented on behalf of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies James Cook University, Townsville, Australia.

²⁵ Mackay Strategic Pty Ltd, op.cit., pp. 44-47

Historic Values	Criteria	Excerpts from citations
Australia's National Heritage List	<p>Criterion A: events and processes</p> <p><i>The place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place's importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia's natural or cultural history</i></p>	<p>Cascades Female Factory is highly significant because of its association with the lives of convict women, its demonstration of the changing philosophies of punishment and reform as they relate to women and as a place of tremendous suffering and inhumane treatment.</p> <p>Convict women made a significant contribution to the development of the colonies...</p> <p>...primary site for the reception and incarceration of women convicts</p> <p>...one of the colony's longest running penal institutions operating from 1828 to 1856...</p> <p>Female factories were a unique colonial response to the management of convict women, one that reflects both moral and penal philosophies.</p> <p>The high exterior walls...demonstrate the need to isolate convict women from negative influences and in turn protect society from their perceived corrupting influence.</p> <p>The changing approaches to punishment and reform are demonstrated in the move from convict dormitories in Yard 1 to the solitary apartments in Yard 3 built in 1845 which survive as sandstone footings and subfloor cavities.</p> <p>Cascades Female Factory is highly significant as a site of great suffering.</p> <p>Conclusion: The following matters should be addressed in assessing the potential impact of the HIC Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether there would be any loss of integrity of the physical remains of the solitary cells (also referred to as separate apartments) in Yard 3 • whether there would be any physical or visual impact to the perimeter walls • potential for changes to the visual and sensory environment created by the walled enclosure of the yards

Historic Values	Criteria	Excerpts from citations
Tasmanian Heritage Register	(a) The place is important to the course or pattern of Tasmania's history.	<p>...aspects of the nineteenth-century penal history of Tasmania, important to the past human occupation and evolution of the State and the nation.</p> <p>...the oldest prison in Australia designed and administered solely for women...</p> <p>...relates to aspects of women's history, including the incarceration of women and children. It illustrates the central relationships that made up the female convict experience including those between women and the prison authorities, between women and men, between women and their children, with each other, and between women servants and their masters.</p> <p>The introduction of isolation cells at the Cascades Female Factory - Yard 3 - illustrates the nineteenth-century disciplinary measures, and the intolerance of same-sex relationships.</p> <p>The institutional uses...represent the efforts of a series of governments to deal with various perceived social problems of the day, including poverty, insanity, juvenile crime, homelessness, children born out of wedlock, old age and venereal disease.</p> <p>The site is one of the few historic places in Tasmania where the story from penal oppression to social control and philanthropy can be so clearly traced.</p> <p>Conclusion: The following matters should be addressed in assessing the potential impact of the HIC Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether there would be any loss of integrity of the physical remains of the solitary cells (also referred to as separate apartments) in Yard 3 • whether there would be any physical or visual impact to the perimeter walls

Historic Values	Criteria	Excerpts from citations
<i>Cascades Female Factory Conservation Management Plan</i>	Summary Statement	<p>...one of the longest running and most intact of the 11 female factories established in eastern Australia in the first half of the nineteenth century.</p> <p>The five conjoined rectangular yards with sandstone perimeter walls (secure walled compounds), were constructed between 1828 and 1852, reflecting the growth in convict arrivals to the Colony in this period.</p> <p>...of outstanding historical significance as an Australian colonial component of the British convict transportation system, and forced migration movement.</p> <p>...additionally significant for its post-convict institutional history, whereby over four decades through to the end of the nineteenth century the former Female Factory was recycled as a welfare institution, with a number of different institutionalised populations transferred in and out of the various yards.</p> <p>...one of several former female factory sites in Tasmania including an earlier factory at Hobart (c.1821-c.1828) together with broadly contemporary factories at George Town (c.1822-c.1834), Launceston (1834-1855) and Ross (1847-1854). The Cascades Female Factory was the longest-lived of these Tasmanian facilities. It is also understood to be one of the earliest surviving public facilities constructed in Tasmania, forming one of a relatively small group of surviving sites in public ownership (or part ownership) dating from the early convict period.</p> <p>Conclusion: The following matters should be addressed in assessing the potential impact of the Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether there would be any loss of integrity of the physical remains of the solitary cells (also referred to as separate apartments) in Yard 3 • whether there would be any physical or visual impact to the perimeter walls • potential for changes to the visual and sensory environment created by the walled enclosure of the yards

The use of actual words from the SOUV and other heritage listing citations creates a direct link between values, attributes, and potential impacts, and directed the HIA document to those attributes that might be affected. It was thereby concluded that the potential impacts of the HIC Project, which should be assessed in relation to ‘historic’ attributes, were:

- *whether there would be any loss of integrity of the physical remains of the solitary cells (also referred to as separate apartments) in Yard 3;*
- *whether there would be any physical or visual impact to the perimeter walls; and*
- *potential for changes to the visual and sensory environment created by the walled enclosure of the yards*²⁶.

It was further concluded that the proposed HIC Project could not affect the following historic attributes:

- *the ability of the place to demonstrate the convict period or aspects of the penal system, or post-convict institutional history; and*
- *the ability of the place to demonstrate aspects of women’s history, and the female convict experience, including the incarceration of women and children and changing philosophies of punishment and the suffering and inhumane treatment of women convicts*²⁷.

Applying the ICOMOS 2011 Guidance

The ICOMOS Guidance distinguishes a ‘threshold’ between attributes that contribute to OUV and attributes that contribute to other values. The Guidance also links heritage impact to the scale and severity of change to these attributes, but not to the level of change to the place itself. The impacts of a proposed action may be positive or negative with respect to significant attributes. The Guidance provides a colour-coded scale as a useful tool for grading relative impacts (Table 2).

²⁶ Ibid., p. 68

²⁷ Ibid., p. 68

Table 2: Impact thresholds and the relationship of levels of change to significant attributes of cultural World Heritage properties ²⁸.

WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES – ATTRIBUTES WHICH CONVEY OUV					
Scale and Severity of change/impact	NO CHANGE	NEGLIGIBLE CHANGE	MINOR CHANGE	MODERATE CHANGE	MAJOR CHANGE
Significance of effect or overall impact:	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ large	Large/ very large	Very large

FOR OTHER HERITAGE ASSETS OR ATTRIBUTES – OF VERY HIGH SIGNIFICANCE					
Scale and Severity of change/impact	NO CHANGE	NEGLIGIBLE CHANGE	MINOR CHANGE	MODERATE CHANGE	MAJOR CHANGE
Significance of effect or overall impact:	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ large	Large/ very large	Very large

This approach and grading were applied in the assessment of heritage impacts for the CFF. With respect to historic attributes, it was concluded that a major potential impact consideration was:

- *whether there would be any loss of integrity of the physical remains of the solitary cells (also referred to as separate apartments) in Yard 3.*

This was related to attributes that were also identified as contributing to archaeological values, including the physical integrity of convict era archaeological features. With respect to archaeological attributes, it was concluded that the major potential impact consideration was:

- *would there be physical impact on significant archaeological resources, including the remains of the separate apartments and sub-surface deposits associated with all phases of the history of the place?*

²⁸ ICOMOS. (2011). *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*, pp. 9-10. A publication of the International Council on Monuments and Sites. ICOMOS, Paris, France, in collaboration with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

Design development and HIA were undertaken iteratively, so that understanding of significant attributes and potential impacts informed the design process. The footings of the new HIC building were refined and the levels were changed to enable *in situ* conservation of the known remains of the separate apartments, and to maximise retention and *in situ* conservation of other archaeological deposits, particularly by utilising existing historic service conduits and previous trenches, without the need to excavate new trenches and further disturb archaeological deposits (Figures 3 and 4). This approach prioritised the conservation of attributes that contribute to OUV, while at the same time minimising impact on other significant attributes.

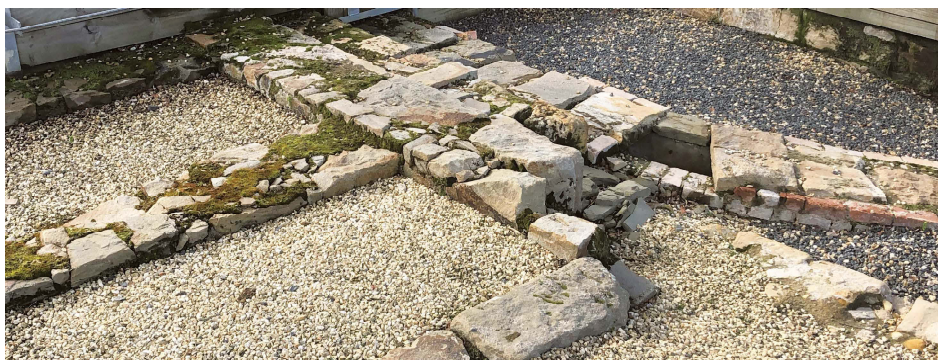


Figure 3: Exposed archaeological features are important attributes of CFF²⁹.

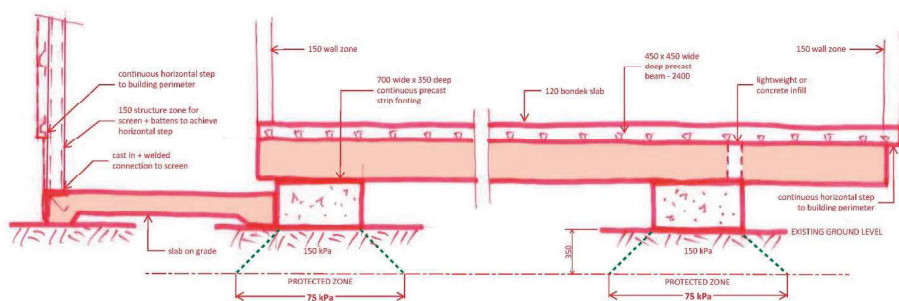


Figure 4: Structural Concept Design, to protect archaeological features³⁰.

²⁹ Foundations and an historic drain relating to the convict 'separate apartments' are important physical attributes of the CFF that contribute to the OUV of the Australian Convict Sites World Heritage Property. They are to be retained, conserved and interpreted as part of the HIC project. (Photo: Richard Mackay 2019)

³⁰ Pre-cast strip footings will be placed above the existing ground level in order to retain and conserve sub-surface archaeological features at the CFF. (Gandy and Roberts, for the Port Arthur Historic Sites Management Authority, March 2019, not to scale. Reproduced from Mackay Strategic Pty Ltd, op.cit., Figure 18, p. 72.)

The outcome of the evolved design and final assessment was a conclusion that there would be a neutral impact on OUV and other attributes in terms of historic values, and a neutral impact on OUV but a slight impact on other attributes with regard to scientific/research values, as summarised in Table 3, which is adapted from a larger table in the HIA for the HIC Project.

Table 3: Summary table of impacts on historic and scientific/research values and attributes³¹.

POTENTIAL HERITAGE IMPACT	NATURE OF IMPACT	IMPACT ON OUV	IMPACT ON OTHER VALUES
Historic Values and Attributes			
Whether there would be any loss of integrity of the physical remains of the solitary cells (also referred to as separate apartments) in Yard 3.	The proposed new building has been designed to sit above the footings of the western row of solitary cells; there will be no physical interference with these remains and there will be additional opportunities to interpret them for visitors. Their authenticity and integrity will remain intact.	Neutral: The property will retain all existing physical evidence associated with the convict story.	Neutral: The ability of the property to demonstrate its historic use and processes will be unaffected.
Scientific/Research Values and Attributes			
Would there be any physical impact on significant archaeological resources, including the remains of the separate apartments and sub-surface deposits associated with all phases of the history of the place?	The solitary cells in Yard 3 and associated deposits will be retained and conserved, undisturbed, in situ. Where archaeological features are disturbed...this work will occur under archaeological supervision and in accordance with relevant guidelines and procedures	Neutral: The property will retain all existing physical evidence associated with the convict story.	Slight: Significant archaeological features will not be affected, and the research potential of disturbed areas will be realised through appropriate archaeological investigation.

³¹ This table is adapted from Mackay Strategic Pty Ltd, op.cit., pp. 76-78.

Conclusion: Reflections on the Role of Attributes in World Heritage

Understanding and documenting the attributes that contribute to the OUV of World Heritage properties is essential for informing decisions that enable OUV to be conserved and transmitted to future generations. The same attributes may also contribute to national and/or local values of World Heritage properties. The case of the proposed HIC at the CFF in Hobart, Australia, illustrates one approach in which the process of the ICOMOS *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties* has been applied using a matrix format that enables consideration of potential impacts on a range of heritage attributes. This approach has optimised the design outcome, clarified the distinction between OUV and other heritage values, and facilitated well-founded decisions by the relevant consent authorities.

World Heritage: The Definition of Outstanding Universal Value and the Role of Attributes



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Early developments in common protection

Care for heritage that is considered relevant or significant for humankind has a relatively long history, which can be found in a number of international documents. Already in 1931, the *Athens Charter*, adopted at the First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, stated the common interest in the “artistic and archaeological property of mankind,” and promoted collaboration for its conservation. A further reference can be found in UNESCO’s Constitution, asserting the need to secure “the conservation and protection of the world’s inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science.” More specific mentions were later included in *UNESCO’s Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict* (1954), and in the *Recommendation Concerning the Safeguarding of Beauty and Character of Landscapes and Sites* (1962), as well as in the *Venice Charter* (1964), adopted at the 2nd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments. However, a real system for international cooperation was only established in 1972, with the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, better known as the *World Heritage Convention*.

This legal instrument was unique in considering mechanisms to protect places that are considered unique and irreplaceable around the world, with a combined vision for cultural and natural heritage, which are more often than not divided and compartmentalized in national and international conservation documents. From the beginning, the *Convention* called for the “collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage of outstanding universal value,” which encompassed the need to protect extraordinary places of global significance, while cultural and natural sites of “special value” at a national or regional level had to be conserved at the national level. This was emphasized in UNESCO’s *Recommendation Concerning the Protection at National Level, of the Cultural and Natural Heritage*, which was issued along with the *Convention* in 1972.

Defining Outstanding Universal Value

The notion of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) is a pivotal element of the *Convention*, yet it was not defined in its text. Many have considered this lacuna a weakness of the *Convention*, while others see it as a show of wisdom by the drafters, given that perceptions of OUV were bound to change over time (and in fact, they have). Instead, the *Convention* leaves it to the World Heritage Committee to define the criteria for properties which can

be considered to have OUV.

Given a lack of a clear definition in the years that followed the adoption of the Convention, numerous debates and meetings took place to slowly define the concepts that would allow the inscription of properties with OUV, while generating a coherent system in the World Heritage List.

One of the first of such meetings took place in the city of Morges, France, in 1976, with the aim of defining the meaning of universal, with an important role played by standards developed for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places in the United States (Stovel, 2008). From the discussions that emerged, a first draft of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (OG) was developed, defining in it the criteria for which a site may be assessed to have OUV, based on proposals made by the three Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee (ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN). These criteria were discussed during the first Committee meeting in 1977, and led to the first inscriptions of properties in 1978.

A report by Michel Parent in 1979 focused on a comparative study of nominations and on the criteria. It asked basic questions on what was understood by each of these criteria, as well as on the character of the OUV, seen under the light of the rarity or uniqueness of the sites, or of their representativity within a system of similar heritage sites. This report made it easier to fine-tune the *Operational Guidelines* and to formally adopt them in 1980. At the time, universal was interpreted as referring to a property which was “highly representative of the culture of which it forms [a] part” (OG, version 1977). The criteria for which sites could have OUV were divided in two sets, with six criteria for cultural sites and four for natural ones.

Criteria for cultural properties in 1977:

- (i) *represent a unique artistic or aesthetic achievement, a masterpiece of the creative genius; or*
- (ii) *have exerted considerable influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on subsequent developments in architecture, monumental sculpture, garden and landscape design, related arts, or human settlements, or*
- (iii) *be unique, extremely rare, or of great antiquity; or*
- (iv) *be among the most characteristic examples of a type of structure, the type representing an important cultural, social, artistic, scientific, technological or*

- industrial development; or*
- (v) be a characteristic example of a significant, traditional style of architecture, method of construction, or human settlement, that is fragile by nature or has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible socio-cultural or economic change; or*
- (vi) be most importantly associated with ideas or beliefs, with events or with persons, of outstanding historical importance or significance.*

Criteria for natural sites in 1977:

- (i) be outstanding examples representing the major stages of the earth's evolutionary history. This category would include sites which represent the major "eras" of geological history such as "the age of reptiles" where the development of the planet's natural diversity can well be demonstrated and such as the "ice age" where early man and his environment underwent major changes; or*
- (ii) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man's interaction with his natural environment. As distinct from the periods of the earth's development, this focuses upon ongoing processes in the development of communities of plants and animals, landforms and marine and freshwater bodies. This category would include for example (a) as geological processes, glaciation and volcanism, (b) as biological evolution, examples of biomes such as tropical rainforests, deserts and tundra (c) as interaction between man and his natural environment, terraced agricultural landscapes; or*
- (iii) contain unique, rare or superlative natural phenomena, formations or features or areas of exceptional natural beauty, such as superlative examples of the most important ecosystems to man, natural features, (for instance, rivers, mountains, waterfalls), spectacles presented by great concentrations of animals, sweeping vistas covered by natural vegetation and exceptional combinations of natural and cultural elements; or*
- (iv) be habitats where populations of rare or endangered species of plants and animals still survive. This category would include those ecosystems in which concentrations of plants and animals of universal interest and significance can be found.*

Properties meeting one or more of these criteria could potentially be considered as having OUV. Additionally, these sites had to meet the test of integrity, and cultural sites

also had to meet the test of authenticity.

Over time, discussions continued on the OUV, and the *Operational Guidelines* have been under constant scrutiny, keeping in mind the need to have an inclusive list, but also reflecting the evolution in the perception of heritage and the values associated with it. One of the marking moments in changes to the *Operational Guidelines* resulted from a series of meetings debating the meaning and implications of authenticity, which ended with an international meeting in Nara, Japan, in 1994 (Stovel, 2008; Cameron and Inaba, 2015). The *Nara Document on Authenticity* (1994) that resulted from this meeting was a fundamental moment of recognition of the diversity in approaches to heritage, including World Heritage. This rethinking led to a wider perception of authenticity and integrity linked to cultural diversity, and considered the wider implications of non-physical aspects of heritage and traditional information sources. Following the adoption of the *Nara Document*, additional meetings were held in other regions. In particular, there was a meeting in San Antonio, Texas (USA) in 1996 to look at the concept of authenticity in an inter-American context, and in Harare (Zimbabwe) with the specific aim of discussing the concepts of integrity and authenticity in the African context.

Another important element at that time was the launch, in 1994, of the *Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List*. Discussions derived from the strategy led to a major revision of the *Operational Guidelines*, the results of which were published in 2005. The changes included a very broad definition of OUV:

Outstanding universal value means cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity (OG, 2005, para 49).

This definition (still in use) continues to rely on a revised set of criteria (see below) as main spine of OUV, but includes an expanded list of aspects of authenticity for cultural heritage coming from the Nara and Zimbabwe documents, the inclusion of the condition of integrity to cultural heritage, and perhaps most importantly, the inclusion of management as a part of the concept of OUV.

The revised criteria no longer divided heritage in two separate sets, but rather joined them into a single list of ten in an attempt to better link culture and nature.

- (i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;*
- (ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;*
- (iii) a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;*
- (iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;*
- (v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;*
- (vi) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria);*
- (vii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;*
- (viii) be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth's history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;*
- (ix) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals;*
- (x) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.*

Another important element that came with the Global Strategy was the need to make sure properties inscribed on the List represented the entire spectrum of cultural and natural sites. A specific study on existing gaps (ICOMOS, 2004) for cultural sites and a series of studies by IUCN for natural sites led to a revised nomination process, and to the proposal of a thematic framework for new nominations.

Need to focus on protection after inscription: the role of the SOUV and attributes

The key goal of the *Convention* is to conserve and manage properties inscribed on the List, and to specify the post-inscription obligations of States Parties who have proposed those sites for inscription. The *Operational Guidelines* clearly state that the “Protection and management of World Heritage properties should ensure that the outstanding universal value, the conditions of integrity and/or authenticity at the time of inscription are maintained or enhanced in the future” (OG, 2005, para 96). However, with increasingly complex sites inscribed on the List, including cultural landscapes, mixed sites, cultural routes and transboundary nominations, as well as increased pressures on sites caused both by natural and man-made hazards, a more systematic approach is required for conservation and management. In particular, there is a need to understand what should be protected in an ever-changing world. As a consequence, the 2005 *Operational Guidelines* required properties being considered for nomination to have a Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV). The statement describes the property, states the criteria as applied to the property, describes the property’s integrity (cultural and natural properties) and authenticity (cultural properties), and gives a brief summary of the management in force at the property, whether formal, informal, or a mix of both. For those properties already inscribed on the List, the Committee requested a retrospective statement. The point of the SOUV was to allow a State Party and all relevant stakeholders to understand why the property was inscribed on the List and what are the significant features that need to be protected.

While the revisions to the *Operational Guidelines* in 2005 were largely positive and helped to clarify the implementation of the *Convention* for States Parties and other stakeholders, there was one particular area which has caused some confusion: that of the concept of attributes. There is currently a misunderstanding of the use of the terms “attributes” and “aspects” as they apply to the concept of authenticity.

Prior to their revision in 2005, the *Operational Guidelines* referred to four aspects to be considered in relation to authenticity. These aspects were design, material, workmanship, and setting.

The *Nara Document* instead provides a much-expanded list of aspects of authenticity which should be tested to determine whether authenticity is present in a heritage place. This expanded list includes form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, spirit and feeling, and other internal and

external factors. Several other aspects were added following a meeting at Great Zimbabwe, which looked at authenticity in an African context (Saouma-Forero, 2000). These additional aspects included management systems, language, and other forms of intangible heritage.

The 2005 revision of the *Operational Guidelines* therefore provided this expanded list of aspects of authenticity that are currently in use:

- form and design;
- materials and substance;
- use and function;
- traditions, techniques and management systems;
- location and setting;
- language, and other forms of intangible heritage;
- spirit and feeling;
- and other internal and external factors.

The confusion arises from wording in the 2005 revision that refers to this list as a list of “attributes” rather than “aspects.”

Paragraph 82 of the *Operational Guidelines* incorrectly uses the word attributes instead of aspects, stating, “Depending on the type of cultural heritage, and its cultural context, properties may be understood to meet the conditions of authenticity if their cultural values (as recognized in the nomination criteria proposed) are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of *attributes* including:...” (emphasis added). This incorrect use of attributes comes despite an earlier correct reference in paragraph 80, which states, “Knowledge and understanding of these sources of information, in relation to original and subsequent characteristics of the cultural heritage, and their meaning, are the requisite bases for assessing all *aspects* of authenticity” (emphasis again added).

This imprecise wording has led to confusion when trying to determine the attributes of a World Heritage property. We would argue that in their broadest conception with regard to cultural heritage, attributes can be considered as both physical tangible and also intangible elements or processes which convey the OUV of the property. The safeguarding of the OUV rests on our ability to protect and conserve these attributes which together demonstrate the significance of the property.

A clear description of those attributes is fundamental for clarifying what is considered

to be important within a site and its setting and, therefore, what needs to be protected to maintain the property's OUV. That clear identification, description, and understanding of the attributes linked to the OUV is fundamental for any decision-making at all levels. Each management decision needs to cover this question: "Will the outcomes have a positive or negative impact on the attributes that convey the OUV?" Actions that would have negative effects should obviously be avoided. Attributes are linked to elements that convey the integrity of the site (referring to the completeness and intactness of the attributes needed to convey the OUV), and for cultural sites, the elements that convey its authenticity (attributes that truthfully convey the OUV).

The resulting SOUV is fundamental for the current and future "effective protection and management of the property" (OG, 2005, para 51). The SOUV, and the clear identification of the attributes that convey it, will represent the baseline with which to consider the state of conservation of the site, as well as any revision of the management systems or plans, and any potential changes in use, or the impact of any projects in and around the property. Attributes will have a fundamental role when undertaking impact assessments.

An example of using attributes and aspects

In order to help clarify the concepts of attributes and aspects, three World Heritage properties can be taken as examples of a similar heritage typology. They are the Etruscan Necropolises of Cerveteri and Tarquinia (Italy), the Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties (China), and the Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi (Uganda). All three are tomb sites with similar, although not exactly matching, criteria for inscription. Using these three properties, we can examine the link between criteria, attributes, and aspects of authenticity.

*Etruscan Necropolises of Cerveteri and Tarquinia inscribed under criteria (i), (iii), and (iv)*¹

Criterion (i): The necropolises of Tarquinia and Cerveteri are masterpieces of creative genius: Tarquinia's large-scale wall paintings are exceptional both for their formal qualities and for their content, which reveal aspects of life, death, and religious beliefs of the ancient Etruscans. Cerveteri shows in a funerary context the same town planning

¹ [<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1158/>] (accessed September 29, 2020).

and architectural schemes used in an ancient city.

Criterion (iii): The two necropolises constitute a unique and exceptional testimony to the ancient Etruscan civilisation, the only urban type of civilisation in pre-Roman Italy. Moreover, the depiction of daily life in the frescoed tombs, many of which are replicas of Etruscan houses, is a unique testimony to this vanished culture.

Criterion (iv): Many of the tombs of Tarquinia and Cerveteri represent types of buildings which no longer exist in any other form. The cemeteries, replicas of Etruscan town planning schemes, are some of the earliest existing in the region.

This property was inscribed in 2004 before SOUV was required, and as of now there is no completed SOUV for the property. Nevertheless, the wording of the brief description of the property and the criteria provide us with a list of the key attributes that need to be protected in order to safeguard the OUV. The attributes to be safeguarded include:

- the frescoed wall paintings with their depictions of daily life;
- the architectural forms of the tombs;
- the spatial relationships between tombs, including the city-like plans of the streets, small squares, and neighborhoods;
- the monumental aspects of some of the tombs, the cut rock and impressive tumuli, rock carvings on the walls, and the typologies of tombs—including trenches cut in rock, tumuli, and some tombs carved in rock in the shape of huts or houses with a wealth of structural detail.

All of these attributes must be conserved in order to safeguard the OUV of the property.

If we then look at the issue of the aspects to examine in order to understand the authenticity, we could see the need to look at form and design (the design elements of the tombs and the city-like layout), materials and substance (the rock cuts, the frescoes, etc.), use and function (the use as a burial site should be respected), and setting (insofar as there is a need to be able to see these sites within their surroundings so as to comprehend their design elements). In short, we would need to examine these aspects of authenticity of the various attributes to ensure that they genuinely convey the property's OUV.

Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties inscribed under criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), and (vi) ²

Criterion (i): The harmonious integration of remarkable architectural groups in a natural environment chosen to meet the criteria of geomancy (Fengshui) makes the Ming and Qing Imperial Tombs masterpieces of human creative genius.

Criterion (ii): The tombs represent a phase of development, where the previous traditions are integrated into the forms of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, also becoming the basis for the subsequent development.

Criterion (iii): The imperial mausolea are outstanding testimony to a cultural and architectural tradition that for over five hundred years dominated this part of the world.

Criterion (iv): The architectures of the Imperial Tombs integrated into the natural environment perfectly, making up a unique ensemble of cultural landscapes. They are the exceptional examples of the ancient imperial tombs of China.

Criterion (vi): The Ming and Qing Tombs are dazzling illustrations of the beliefs, world view, and geomantic theories of Fengshui prevalent in feudal China. They have served as burial edifices for illustrious personages and as the theatre for major events that have marked the history of China.

In this case, a complete SOUV exists and provides us with a list of key attributes, found throughout the document. These include:

- the tombs follow the precepts of traditional Chinese geomancy and *Fengshui* theory, reflecting the philosophical idea of “harmony between man and nature”;
- more specifically, the topographical settings are carefully chosen according to principles of geomancy (*Fengshui*);
- the tombs are also exemplary of the cultural and architectural traditions of the Ming and Qing dynasties, with rich decoration of stone statues and carvings, and tiles with

² [<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1004/>] (accessed September 29, 2020).

dragon motifs;

- there are numerous buildings of traditional architectural design and decoration present, laid out according to Chinese hierarchical rules;
- in addition to the main buildings, there are also important underground chambers;
- the tombs incorporate sacred ways lined with stone monuments and sculptures designed to accommodate ongoing royal ceremonies, as well as the passage of the spirits of the dead.

Regarding the aspects to examine to understand the authenticity, we could see the need to examine form and design (the design elements of the tombs and the architectural traditions), materials and substance (building materials, rich decorations, stone statues and carvings, tiles, etc.), use and function (the use as a burial site should be respected), and setting (very important at this site in terms of understanding the harmony between man and nature). These aspects are similar to those of the Etruscan tombs, but we would also need to add spirit and feeling in regard to the need to understand the precepts of traditional Chinese geomancy, Fengshui theory and the philosophical idea of harmony between man and nature.

Each of the attributes would need to be examined for the related aspects in order to gauge their authenticity and ensure that they genuinely convey the OUV of the property.

Tombs of Buganda Kings at Kasubi inscribed under criteria (i), (iii), (iv), and (vi) ³

Criterion (i): The Kasubi Tombs site is a masterpiece of human creativity both in its conception and its execution.

Criterion (iii): The Kasubi Tombs site bears eloquent witness to the living cultural traditions of the Baganda.

Criterion (iv): The spatial organization of the Kasubi Tombs site represents the best extant example of a Baganda palace/architectural ensemble. Built in the finest traditions of Ganda architecture and palace design, it reflects technical achievements developed over many centuries.

³ [<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1022/>] (accessed September 29, 2020).

Criterion (vi): The built and natural elements of the Kasubi Tombs site are charged with historical, traditional, and spiritual values. It is a major spiritual centre for the Baganda and is the most active religious place in the kingdom.

The SOUV of this property is more detailed than the first two, from which can be derived the following list of key attributes:

- it's hillside location overlooking Kampala;
- the Muzibu Azaala Mpanga, the main tomb building, which is circular and surmounted by a dome and with a surrounding courtyard (Olugya);
- surrounding buildings such as the gatehouse and drum house;
- surrounding agricultural land farmed by traditional methods;
- the border of the site marked with the traditional bark cloth trees;
- use of vegetal materials comprised of wooden poles, spear grass, reeds and wattle along with the practice of using a grass thatched roof resting on structural rings of palm tree fronds;
- internal elements and finishing materials, such as the long wooden poles wrapped in bark cloth decoration;
- the spatial organization of the site (the placement of the buildings, tombs, and graveyards of members of the royal family around the Muzibu-Azaala- Mpanga);
- traditional land-tenure and land-use practice;
- traditional cultural and religious practices with frequently performed rituals;
- traditional architectural craftsmanship and the required skills;
- traditional management system.

As with the previous two properties, the aspects to examine to understand the authenticity of the property include form and design (the form and design element of the main tomb and other buildings, the design of the whole compound, and the architectural traditions), materials and substance (architectural materials, decoration, etc. Note that in this case, some of the building materials—such as the thatch—would need to be renewed regularly, but using the same type of material and the same techniques. Other materials would need more standard conservation measures.), use and function (the use as a burial site should be respected as should the still living cultural and religious traditions), location and setting (its

overlooking of Kampala is important). As with the Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties, we would also need to add spirit and feeling in regard to cultural, religious, and spiritual practices that are linked to the property. In this case, however, we would have to add management systems to take into account the traditional management system present, as well as the other forms of intangible heritage that are present at the property.

Looking at these three examples, one can find that even the same property typology will yield different attributes, and therefore aspects of authenticity, when considering the management of the property over time. As such, it is important that when sites are being nominated, a detailed framework should be developed to identify and understand all of the necessary attributes that convey OUV and the aspects of authenticity that need to be examined. This framework will ensure that these attributes genuinely express the values.

Final considerations

The *World Heritage Convention* has provided, over the years, a framework for cooperation and conservation of sites around the world. The evolution in ways to approach heritage, with a welcome widening in the understanding of relative and diverse perceptions of heritage in different parts of world, linked to cultural diversity, is manifested in the many revisions made to the *Operational Guidelines*. Such revisions will likely continue in the future, as new elements are discussed and taken into consideration.

The *Convention* was created in the aftermath of two World Wars, and the destruction they entailed, but also at a moment when changes around the world were perceived as increasing at a fast and worrying pace. Sites inscribed on the World Heritage List were considered to be relevant to tell the history of our planet, and therefore worth protecting in a collective effort, and as a special obligation of each State Party inscribing a site. Challenges remain today, with still too many sites being targeted during conflicts as well as increasing pressures caused by climate change, rapid urban growth, development projects, and insufficient economic resources.

Consequently, there is a need to continue focusing on strong and effective conservation and management systems for those properties, which can then be used as references for other sites at the national level. Clarity in decision-making mechanisms will be crucial for sustainable actions at the properties, and clear statements of OUV and the attributes that convey it play a fundamental role. ICCROM and IUCN, in collaboration with ICOMOS, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, and with the support from the Ministry of Climate and

Environment of Norway, as well as additional financial support from the Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea and the Federal Office for the Environment of Switzerland, are currently developing further steps forward within the World Heritage Leadership Programme. This work will encourage more integrated management of both cultural and natural sites, with a revision and alignment of terminology and joint methodologies for management.

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What Do You Mean by “Attributes?”

—The Word “Attributes” as Used in the *Operational Guidelines* and Other World Heritage-Related Documents



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Introduction: What do you mean by “attributes?”

The word “attribute(s)” has recently been attracting the attention of people who are working for the new nomination and/or conservation of World Heritage properties in Japan, ranging from national government officers to local government officers, experts, and consultants, including myself. This is because we hear the word in question more and more often from the mouths of international and domestic experts on different occasions, such as at World Heritage Committee meetings, international expert meetings, and domestic committee meetings.

However, not a few people are left wondering if they really understand what these experts are talking about. In my understanding, this is neither a language issue nor a translation issue (in the Japanese language, the word in question is usually translated to the Japanese word *zokusei* (or 属性 in Chinese characters) or simply borrowed from the English language with the Japanized pronunciation, *atolibyu:to*). Rather, it is a reflection of different people using the same word in different but confusingly similar contexts without clarifying exactly what they mean by “attributes.”

When I hear somebody utter the word “attributes,” I am always tempted to ask, “What do you mean by attributes? Attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV), those of the World Heritage property in question, those of authenticity, or anything else?” and also, “Is there any difference in meaning between attributes of the property and those of the OUV?”

1. Attributes of authenticity (paragraph 82 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention)

Until recently, “attributes” always meant those of authenticity, as is explained in paragraph 82 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (hereinafter the *Operational Guidelines*) to me. Or attributes of authenticity (e.g. form and design; materials and substance; use and function; traditions, techniques and management systems; location and setting; language, and other forms of intangible heritage; spirit and feeling; etc.) were the most important, because it was necessary to identify them in proving that the condition of authenticity is met in the nomination dossier.

Most of the people who have been involved in the nomination and/or conservation of World Heritage properties in Japan should be familiar with the use of the word “attributes”

in this context.

Confusion started when people started to use the word in other contexts more often, probably because the newer World Heritage properties have become more complex in value as well as physical composition, necessitating detailed discussion and/or specification of exactly what constitute the value and/or the World Heritage property for the purposes of evaluation for new inscription and conservation of inscribed properties. The clarification of what constitutes the value and/or the World Heritage property has also become extremely critical, as there arise more and more cases of development projects impacting World Heritage properties.

2. Other uses of “attributes” in the *Operational Guidelines*

The English word “attributes” is not a technical term itself; it is an ordinary word commonly used in the English language, whether British or American, meaning a character, quality, or feature of a person or thing. Books with titles in the vein of attributes of successful leaders, successful businesspeople and so on are readily available through online bookshops.

Attribute

In British English

NOUN

2. a property, quality, or feature belonging to or representative of a person or thing
3. an object accepted as belonging to a particular office or position
4. grammar
 - a. an adjective or adjectival phrase
 - b. an attributive adjective
5. logic
the property, quality, or feature that is affirmed or denied concerning the subject of a proposition

Collins English Dictionary. Copyright © HarperCollins Publishers

Attribute

In American English

NOUN

3. a characteristic or quality of a person or thing
4. an object used in literature or art as a symbol for a person, office, etc.
winged feet are the attribute of Mercury
5. Grammar
a word or phrase used adjectivally

Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 4th Edition. Copyright © 2010 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. All rights reserved.

Therefore, the word “attribute(s)” appears in the *Operational Guidelines* in contexts other than authenticity:

Integrity is a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its “attributes” (paragraph 88);

Boundaries should be drawn to incorporate all the “attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value” (paragraph 99);

Boundaries should be drawn to include all those areas and “attributes that are a direct tangible expression of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property” (paragraph 100); and

Each component part (of a serial property) ... may include, inter alia, “intangible attributes.” (paragraph 137)

It should be noted that no formal definition is given to the word “attributes” in the *Operational Guidelines*, indicating that it was not used as a technical term. In addition, the use of the word is almost limited to the aforementioned paragraphs in the *Operational Guidelines*: “attributes” in paragraphs 88, 99, and 100 are construed to relate to the physical components of a World Heritage property (because they can be included within geographically drawn boundaries), whereas “attributes” in paragraph 137 are construed to relate to those of the OUV (because they are intangible or immaterial). Given the fact that there are not many cases that the word “attributes” is used in the *Operational Guidelines*, it would not have been necessary to give a formal definition to the word in the *Operational Guidelines*.

The casualness with which the word “attributes” is used in the *Operational Guidelines* is also apparent in the fact that the similarly common word “elements” is also used without distinction. In paragraph 88 of the *Operational Guidelines*, the phrase “elements necessary to express its Outstanding Universal Value” is used. In this particular case, “elements” can be replaced with “attributes” without any difference in meaning and, if so, it should probably be so paraphrased for the purposes of consistency and avoiding confusion ¹.

3. “Attributes” in *Preparing World Heritage Nominations (Second edition)* (2011)

The document *Preparing World Heritage Nominations (Second edition)* (2011) was

published as a non-statutory resource manual by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and the three statutory advisory bodies to the World Heritage Committee (ICCRROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN) to provide additional guidance on preparing nominations to the World Heritage List. This important document provides explanations, not necessarily a definition, about the word “attributes” or features, as quoted in the box below.

Explanations about attributes given in the *Preparing World Heritage Nominations (Second edition) (2011)*

ATTRIBUTES OR FEATURES (p. 31)

Attributes are aspects of a property which are associated with or express the Outstanding Universal Value. Attributes can be tangible or intangible. The Operational Guidelines indicate a range of types of attribute which might convey Outstanding Universal Value, including:

- form and design;
- materials and substance;
- use and function;
- traditions, techniques and management systems;
- location and setting;
- language, and other forms of intangible heritage; and
- spirit and feeling (paragraph 82).

This list is for guidance. It is essential that the attributes identified for a property should flow from the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value and the justification for the criteria.

Attributes must be identified as they are vital to understanding authenticity and integrity, and are the focus of protection, conservation and management.

For natural properties, it is more common to speak of ‘features’, although the word attributes is sometimes used. Examples of attributes for natural properties could include:

- visual or aesthetic significance;
- scale of the extent of physical features or natural habitats;

¹ The word “element(s)” is not a technical term in the *World Heritage Convention*, and I find this word useful, particularly when breaking down a World Heritage property or a component part of a serial World Heritage property into constituent “elements” that are related to the OUV of the property, such as aboveground monuments, underground archaeological remains, and sometimes visual linkages between different component parts, distinguishing them from other “elements” that are not related to the OUV of the property, such as parking lots, toilets, and utility poles, for management purposes.

However, it should be kept in mind that the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (ICH), adopted in 2003, uses the word “element” as a technical term to refer to individual intangible heritage “elements” that are inscribed on its List, in the same manner that the *World Heritage Convention* of 1972 uses the word “property” to refer to individual World Heritage “properties” on its List.

This indicates that you might need to be careful about using the word “element(s),” too, when talking about both conventions at the same time. However, I see no other alternative but to continue to use the word “element(s)” in the aforementioned context, as long as one writes or speaks within the purview of the *World Heritage Convention*.

- intactness of physical or ecological processes;
- naturalness, and intactness of natural systems;
- viability of populations of rare species; and
- rarity.

Identifying attributes and features (p. 59)

World Heritage properties are places that convey their Outstanding Universal Value.

Cultural value may relate to intangible qualities such as social structure, economic needs and political context, in space as well as time. It may relate to famous events, persons or works of art, literature, science or music. However, the World Heritage Convention is a property-based convention – properties themselves are inscribed on the List, not ideas or people as such, however great their global influence. Listed properties are required to demonstrate Outstanding Universal Value through their attributes.

Having considered what the potential Outstanding Universal Value of a natural or cultural property might be, it is essential to consider the attributes, more commonly called features for natural properties, which convey the potential Outstanding Universal Value and allow an understanding of that value.

These attributes will be the focus of protection and management actions, and institutional arrangements, and their disposition will inform the boundary of the property.

Attributes might be physical qualities or fabric but can also be processes associated with a property that impact on physical qualities, such as natural or agricultural processes, social arrangements or cultural practices that have shaped distinctive landscapes. For natural properties they can be specific landscape features, areas of habitat, aspects relating to environmental quality (such as intactness, high / pristine environmental quality), scale and naturalness of habitats, and size and viability of wildlife populations.

A useful technique for complex properties or properties, and in particular cultural properties, with a complex layering of attributes is to map the important attributes and the values they convey. This mapping can assist with understanding the relationship between attributes, but it can also highlight conflicts or management issues, and it is essential for the delineation of boundaries.

In the case of extensions to properties, the attributes of the original nomination are examined and consideration is given to how these might be exemplified, extended, complemented or amplified by the attributes of the proposed extension, while bearing the same Outstanding Universal Value.

(Underlines are added by the author.)

Although the statutory *Operational Guidelines* give no formal definition or explanation to the word “attributes,” the resource manual does provide additional guidance by saying particularly “[a]ttributes are aspects of a property which are associated with or express the Outstanding Universal Value” and “[a]ttributes can be tangible or intangible.”

It is also interesting to note that the word “attributes” is used in this resource manual frequently throughout the document in contrast with the limited use of the word in the statutory *Operational Guidelines*, although it is not the intention of this article to analyze whether this document spread the use of the word “attributes” among those working in the World Heritage field or it only reflected the spreading use of the word among them.

4. Theoretical analysis of attributes of the property vis-à-vis those of the OUV

Before taking a look at the actual or practical use of the word attribute(s) in World Heritage documents in the next session, in this section I attempt a theoretical analysis, with a view to differentiating attributes of the property from those of the OUV.

Let me first clarify the difference between attributes and component (parts) of a serial property, since I suspect that some might find them confusingly similar.

The word “component(s)” or the phrase “component part(s)” is used when referring to a serial property, which “include two or more component parts” (paragraph 137 of the *Operational Guidelines*). Physically, component parts are individually sited on the map with geographical coordinates, definite boundaries, and measurable areas. In terms of value, each component part, whose individual value does not possess OUV, contributes to the total OUV of the property as a whole (Item (b) of paragraph 137 of the *Operational Guidelines*) (Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1: Schematic Figure of Relation Between a World Heritage Property and the OUV

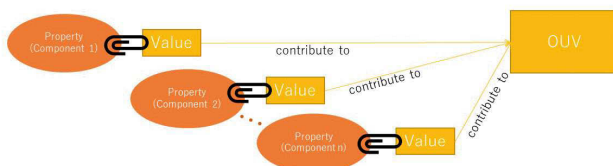


Figure 2: Schematic Figure of Relations Between a Serial Property and the OUV

Source: Originally produced.

The word “attribute(s)” is used when a World Heritage property, or each component part in the case of a serial property, is broken down for detailed analysis.

Attributes of the property are what compose the property, including cultural elements (e.g. monuments, buildings, gardens, historic sites, archaeological sites, cities, and routes) and natural elements (e.g. land, sea, rivers, mountains, and forests). Attributes can include not only tangible elements, but also intangible elements (e.g. spirituality and use) (Figure 3).

In the case of a serial property, each component part has its own attributes (Figures 2 and 4). The intangible attributes of a serial property can include overarching elements such as visual links among the individual component parts (Figure 4).

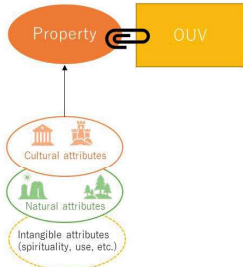


Figure 3: Schematic Figure of Relations Between Property and Attributes of the Property

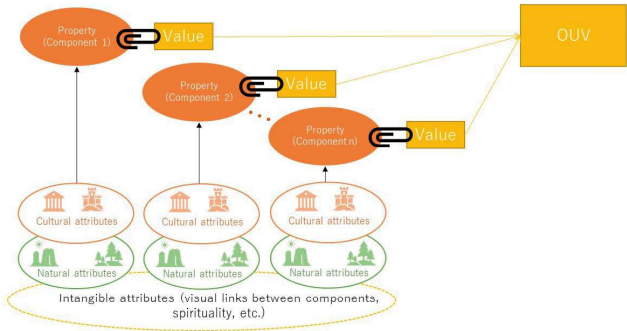


Figure 4: Schematic Figure of Relations of Components of a Serial Property and Attributes of the Property

Source: Originally produced.

The word “attribute(s)” can also be used when the OUV is broken down for detailed analysis, particularly in the case of that of a serial property (Figures 2 and 5).

In the case of a serial property, each component part should contribute to the OUV of the property as a whole (Figure 5). However, in many cases, it is not easy to explain how different component parts contribute to the OUV, probably because different component parts can contribute to various aspects of OUV to varying degrees.

In an effort to somehow clarify this complex relation in the nomination dossier, the OUV or the narrative Statement of OUV is sometimes broken down into a couple of key aspects that capture its essence. Through these attributes of the OUV, it is to be verified if and how each component part contributes to it.

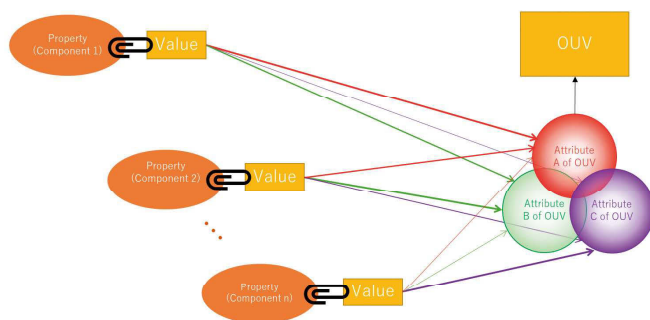


Figure 5: Schematic Figure of Relations Between Components of a Serial Property and Attributes of OUV

Source: Originally produced.

5. The actual way that the word “attributes” is used in World Heritage Committee’s decisions

This section looks into how the word “attribute(s)” is actually used, with the theoretical difference between the attributes of the property and those of the OUV as shown in the previous section in mind.

ICOMOS uses the word “attribute(s)” many times in its evaluation report; most evidently, ICOMOS sometimes sets forth a special paragraph titled attributes, as is quoted in the box below.

Attributes

The tangible attributes of the serial property are the archaeological structures and sites, containing some fifteen furnaces still standing, several furnace bases, assemblages of slag, mines and some traces of dwellings. The serial property is also characterised by a set of intangible attributes, linked to smithing work. The blacksmiths still play an important role today in supplying and maintaining the tools and instruments necessary for everyday life and in numerous rituals. (Ancient ferrous metallurgy sites (Burkina Faso), p. 50 of WHC-19/43.COM/INF.8B1, ICOMOS 2019 Evaluations of Nominations of Cultural and Mixed Properties)

In this case, the word “attribute(s)” is used to refer to those of the (serial) property, not those of the OUV.

Secondly, the use of the word “attribute(s)” in the operative clauses of the World Heritage Committee decisions is looked into, because these are the most important texts in the World Heritage system that impact the States Parties.

In the operative clauses of the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee (Baku, 2019) mainly under Agenda Items 7 and 8 (state of conservation and new nominations), 38 cases in which the word “attribute(s)” is used have been identified, which can broadly be categorized into the following three patterns.

Pattern 1. Attributes of the property

Out of the 38 cases, more than half (23 cases) are categorized under this pattern (e.g., “mapping of tangible and intangible attributes of the property,” “a database of archaeological attributes ... in the property,” “fragile attributes across the whole property,” “attributes ... in each of the components of the nominated property,” “attributes within the 12 property components,” and “the built attributes of the existing and proposed components”).

Pattern 2. Attributes that contribute to the OUV

The second pattern refers to the OUV, but indirectly, using verbal phrases such as “contribute to” and “convey.” There were 10 cases (around 25%): e.g., “conservation of all attributes, which convey the OUV of the property,” “attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV),” “conservation of the tangible and intangible attributes that convey the OUV,” “attributes that have significance in relation to the OUV of the property,” “an inventory of ... the attributes that contribute to the Outstanding

Universal Value (OUV) of the property as a whole,” “all natural attributes contributing to the stated Outstanding Universal Value,” “they are not attributes associated with the Outstanding Universal Value,” and “reducing pressures on the attributes which underpin OUV.”

This pattern is considered to be a variant of Pattern 1, referring to the attributes of the property semantically, although it refers to the OUV in the language.

Pattern 3. Attributes of the OUV

There were five cases in which the phrase, “attributes of the OUV,” were used in the operative clauses of the decisions of the 43rd World Heritage Committee: i.e., “documenting the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of the property,” “impact on the property’s attributes of Outstanding Universal Value,” “the specific presence of the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value,” “ensuring that the elements of this system are conserved and managed as attributes of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property,” and “establishing as a priority, a detailed condition assessment of all the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.”

Although they refer to the OUV in the language, all of these examples can be construed as meaning attributes of the property semantically. In other words, “of” in these examples is actually used in the sense of “contributing to” as shown in Figures 3 and 4, not in the sense of “attribute(s) of the OUV” shown in Figure 5 of the theoretical analysis.

As far as the actual use of the word, “attribute(s),” in ICOMOS evaluation reports and World Heritage Committee decisions is concerned, it appears that it is predominantly used in the sense of “attribute(s) of the property” as shown in Figures 3 and 4 of the theoretical analysis. It is indicated that it is not usual that the phrase, “attribute(s) of the OUV,” is used in the sense of Figure 5 of the theoretical analysis.

However, I hereby point out that the phrase or concept, “attribute(s) of the OUV” is often used in the sense of Figure 5 of the theoretical analysis, when the recent nomination dossiers of Japan are prepared for the purpose of clarifying how each component part of a serial property (serial nomination is today the mainstream for nomination from Japan) contributes to the OUV of the property as a whole. Therefore, the cause of confusion often felt by people working in the World Heritage field in Japan, including myself, when hearing the word “attribute(s)” can be ascribed to the difference in the use of the word

“attribute(s).” Whereas the word “attribute(s)” is more often used to refer to attributes of the property (in the sense of Figures 3 and 4) in the ICOMOS and World Heritage Committee documents, it is often used differently to refer to attributes of the OUV (in the sense of Figure 5) in Japan.

6. Humble recommendations to avoid confusion

Based on the aforementioned analysis, I humbly propose some recommendations to avoid confusion encompassing the word “attributes” within the purview of the *World Heritage Convention*:

- (1) When you are talking about a component part(s) of a serial property, avoid using the word “attribute(s)” and use the phrase, “component(s),” “part(s),” or “component part(s);”
- (2) Specify whether you are talking about attributes of authenticity (as in paragraph 82 of the *Operational Guidelines*), attributes of the property, attributes contributing to the OUV, or attributes of the OUV, whenever possible;
- (3) When referring to attribute(s) of the property, the phrase, “attribute(s) of the OUV,” should be avoided and phrases such as “attribute(s) of the property” and “attribute(s) contributing to the OUV” should be used, in light of the possibility that the phrase, “attribute(s) of the OUV,” may be used in different meanings by different people; and
- (4) Refrain from using the word “attributes” in other cases, whenever there are alternative words or phrases in the context of the *World Heritage Convention*.

Epilogue: Saints in Art, Buddhist images, and the OUV

Mulling over the word “attributes” in relation to the World Heritage, particularly those of the OUV, I cannot stop thinking about attributes of saints in art (refer to the fourth definition of Webster’s New World College Dictionary, 4th Edition, quoted above).

In other words, in my view, what attributes are to the OUV might be somewhat analogous with what attributes are to saints in art.

Saints depicted in artworks can vary from one painting to another and can be so realistic and elaborate as to defy easy identification as such. However, with “attributes,” viewers can easily identify the saint (Figure 6).

Similarly, with Buddhist images, a medicine bowl held in one hand shows the identity

of the statue as Bhaishajya-guru, the healing Buddha.

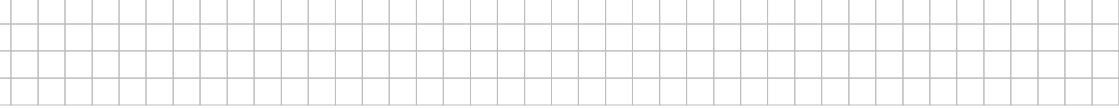
As the Statement (or justification) of the OUV, which is the official description of the OUV of the World Heritage property, can be sometimes elusive, it is probably expected from whatever is meant by “attributes” to provide concrete clues to identifying and capturing the OUV.



Figure 6: Last Communion of St. Lucy
Oil on canvas at Santi Apostoli, Venice,
painted in 1747-48 by TIEPOLO, Giovanni
Battista (public domain)
St. Lucy’s distinguishing attribute, her eyes
on a salver, is in the bottom right.

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Outstanding Universal Value and Attributes



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It is common knowledge, especially since the adoption of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* in 2003, that the 1972 *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage* deals with tangible, material properties. The subject of the *Convention* is natural areas, landscapes, buildings, and groups of buildings. In terms of cultural properties, it deals only with man-made structures or spaces in relation to habitation, production, or religion, in other words the symbolic relationship with one or more divinities or a greater being beyond the known world. These are places or monuments offering a real, sensory experience through vision, touch, or the journey taken.

In the spirit and the text of the *Convention*, properties eligible for the World Heritage List must satisfy two conditions for selection: first of all, their value must be universal—in other words recognizable by all beyond national and cultural borders—and it must be exceptional. These dual conditions must be emphasized; universality alone does not suffice, but must be reinforced by actual exceptionality. Thus this requirement typifies properties that are either truly unique (criteria (i) to (iii) stipulated in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* [hereinafter, “*Guidelines*”] deal with exceptionality) or outstanding examples of a type (corresponding to criteria (iv) and (v) stipulated in the *Guidelines*). The development of these criteria adopted for the implementation of the *Convention* from the very beginning of its application has not been challenged, despite the evolution of the World Heritage conceptual field over the last 40 years. Notwithstanding certain editorial nuances conveying this evolution in successive versions of the *Guidelines*, the criteria have maintained their normative value, defining the typological framework for properties eligible for consideration as having “Outstanding Universal Value (OUV).” In reading the criteria, it is noticeable just how much an “architectural” vision of heritage determines, for the greater part, the vision of World Heritage as it was perceived at the outset of the *World Heritage Convention*, which is no longer the case today. OUV is always measured exclusively in relation to the criteria set out in the *Guidelines* and the types of properties that their framework defines. However, during certain nomination projects and processes, questions could be raised concerning the methodology that led to analysis of a property set forth as justification of OUV through exclusive or dominant emphasis of certain criteria. For some years now, the notion of “attribute” has appeared at the methodological articulation level. In practice, submitters point out, under the term attributes, particular physically-defined aspects of properties

to which OUV can specifically be attached (the term “attribute” denotes a concept encompassed by this English word that was originally developed by English-speaking practitioners or commentators in the World Heritage field).

The definition and identification of these attributes for a property are the products of an internal analysis carried out in light of the very definition of OUV adopted for the property. Each of the attributes described must, of course, demonstrably illustrate the property’s qualities in respect of its proposed OUV. They must clearly correspond, either separately or in aggregate, to the various criteria defined by the *Guidelines to justify* OUV and considered appropriate for the proposed property. In some ways, analysis and presentation of attributes can be understood as a methodological tool intended to verify the unity and coherence of OUV: each of the attributes must contribute to this value and not to any other, and this contribution must be sufficiently precise and demonstrable. Similarly, as the nomination project develops, in some ways identification of attributes enables better definition of OUV itself in drawing closer to the meaning inherent in the material elements themselves and putting into perspective, as required, the significance of excessively general arguments.

For advisory bodies and experts brought in to take part in the evaluation process for a nomination, the methodology briefly outlined above also has the advantage of making it easier to understand a property in relation to its proposed OUV, and of making the OUV more factual and concrete.

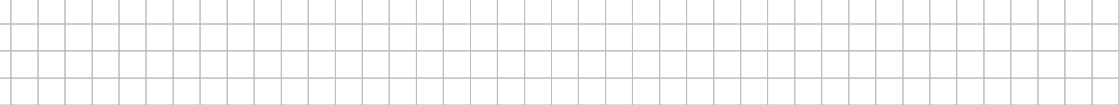
The above is nevertheless only a theoretical view easily applicable to an isolated property, monument, or even group of buildings, with a functional, chronological, technical, or artistic unity that is simply stated in clearly identified and recognizable attributes that can be classified, as it were, into categories corresponding to the criteria defined by the *Guidelines*. However, a World Heritage property, or a property that is proposed to form part of World Heritage, is not always unique or isolated: moreover, such properties constitute a category representing major, iconic monuments that various national parties to the *Convention* proposed during the first decades of its implementation (“wonders of the world” such as the Taj Mahal, the Statue of Liberty, or Chartres Cathedral). Certain examples of this type continue to be proposed and listed. Nevertheless, today there are also more numerous examples of properties that are more complex, extensive, diachronic, and polysemous: old towns are a good example, since it is often difficult to reduce their historical trajectory to precise attributes, which almost by definition can only illustrate a partial, typological (e.g.,

monumental or other), or chronological aspect of the town's history or development. But this applies equally to serial properties, for which OUV, in our opinion, rests far more in the intangible link bringing the components together than in the sum of their qualities and thus their attributes. In serial properties composed of elements similar to one another, such as the Belfries of Belgium and France, the attributes of each element are comparable or even similar. Yet OUV does not depend solely on their presence: other parameters come into play, for example the very magnitude of the series, the exclusivity (or otherwise) of its establishment in a region, and ultimately the exceptionality of the series as such, whatever its magnitude—but not the elements of which it is composed. Potentially, the belfries series could have been even more numerous: it is difficult to state that the belfries not included in the series do not possess, in typological and historical terms, the same attributes as those within the series. However, judgment at another level enabled the conclusion that the group of structures was sufficiently representative of the historical and architectural phenomenon constituted by these belfries in a well-defined region of Europe and to declare the series “closed” within the OUV framework recognized for the series. Account should be taken of the same questions in serial properties constituting an urban industrial or rural landscape: each element can possess a specific attribute that is very precise, whereas OUV results from articulation of elements within a broader grouping, for which no isolated criterion (and thus no particular attribute) is adequate. Take for example the serial property constituted by the industrial and urban landscape of the Nord-Pas de Calais Mining Basin in France, which was listed in 2012. In this serial property, each of the elements relating to mining installations and associated landscape elements (slag heaps, i.e., hills formed by accumulated mining waste), transport infrastructure elements, habitats specific to miners, associated social or religious facilities, etc. possesses its own quite specific character, which could certainly be likened to an attribute, but the OUV corresponds to nothing more than the interlinking of these elements in a given region, despite their substantially very inconsistent preservation (extensive preservation of habitats and facilities, but poor preservation of technical installations for either mining or transportation).

We must never lose sight of the fact that a nomination created for the inscription to the World Heritage List cannot be reduced to a simple analysis of a tangible property and its particular qualities. It always constitutes a cultural act, a specific construct that, admittedly, relies on a tangible property whatever that may be, but that creates value for the here and now, in a manner and a historical and sensory experience that can only be our own. The

World Heritage List is certainly full of properties that, if we had to analyze and understand them today—in other words, describe their attributes—would result in statements of OUV remarkably different to those that the World Heritage Committee recognized at the time of listing, and which might even be declined.

It is vital to always bear in mind that attaching a “heritage” label of any sort to a property above all sends a message, and the World Heritage is no exception to this rule. A message that we elaborate, that we literally *write*, firstly with our sensitivity and our intellect, and that we address to ourselves to create, if possible, shared recognition, social bonds, and common references. A message that we also intend to address to the future, that will only be able to convey the traces of the past in the particular manner that we envisage them, and that we thought we had a duty to pass on.



OUV & Attributes



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The *World Heritage Convention* is based on the concept of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) meaning according to § 49 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*: a “cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity.”¹

But only 33 years after the General Assembly adopted the *World Heritage Convention*, the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) was included for the first time in the 2005 *Operational Guidelines* and has become operational since 2007. It is divided into the following sections: brief synthesis, criteria, integrity, authenticity (only cultural sites) and management requirements. While the draft version is the mission statement for the preparation of a World Heritage nomination, the final version approved by the World Heritage Committee is the central reference document for justifying inscription and assessing developments, risks and threats following recognition as a World Heritage property. As an essential tool for describing the attributes and values, it defines the thinking at the time of inscription on the basis of the criteria in force at the time. A SOUV provides a clear, shared understanding of the reasons for inscription and of what needs managing in order to sustain the Outstanding Universal Value for the long-term.²

The importance of identifying and listing attributes has only become clear in recent years. This is also due to the fact that the conceptual approach has changed: at the beginning, icons were primarily entered in the World Heritage List, the global significance of which was beyond question and had not been verified. Today, however, not only the “best of the best” but also “representatives of the best” are recognized as World Heritage properties.³ This often requires a very sophisticated and detailed justification, which also highlights the gaps in the World Heritage List that nomination closes. In addition, the complex threats to which the World Heritage sites are exposed can only be reliably assessed if the attributes conveying their Outstanding Universal Value are known.

The *World Heritage Convention* is a property-based convention, which means that the physical attributes of a property in particular have to express Outstanding Universal Value.

¹ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>

² Denyer, Susan. (2009, December). Retrospective Statements of OUV for World Heritage Properties inscribed before 1998. Paper presented at the Follow-up on World Heritage Periodic Reporting for Western Europe, Dublin Castle. [<https://whc.unesco.org/en/events/776>]

³ Cameron, Christina. (2005). Evolution of the Application of the “Outstanding Universal Value” for Cultural and Natural Heritage. In Jukka Jokilehto (ed.), *The World Heritage List. What is OUV? Defining the Outstanding Universal Value of Cultural World Heritage Properties, Monuments and Sites XVI*, Annex 1G, pp.71-74. Berlin: ICOMOS.

Therefore, the principal challenge is identifying, mapping and protecting physical attributes that justify the selection of at least one of the justification criteria (i) – (x) as well as the conditions of authenticity. In this context it should be noted that there is a decisive difference between the criteria for cultural and natural heritage: whereas the cultural criteria characterize attributes and values, the natural criteria define types of heritage. Moreover, the *Operational Guidelines* for the Implementation of the *World Heritage Convention* stipulated concrete tangible and intangible attributes only for the conditions of authenticity by listing form and design, material and substance, traditions, techniques and management systems, location and setting, language and other forms of intangible heritage, and spirit and feeling. In addition, the conditions of integrity, are the measure for wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes.

Except for authenticity, attributes have so far only been defined outside the *Operational Guidelines* in the questionnaire for the third cycle of periodic reporting, as follows: “Attributes can be physical qualities or fabric, or the relationships between them. Attributes can also be processes impacting on physical qualities, such as natural or agricultural processes, social arrangements or cultural practices that have shaped distinctive landscapes. For natural properties, they can include landscape features, habitats, aspects of environmental quality (such as intactness, high/pristine environmental quality), scale and naturalness of habitats, and size and viability of wildlife populations.”⁴ As a guide, the focus should fall on approximately five key attributes; generally no more than 15 should be mapped. This concentration makes sense; an over-detailed presentation of attributes runs the risk of losing focus on the essentials.

Attribute mapping is therefore a prerequisite for

- drafting a SOUV as the mission statement for the application process,
- elaborating a successful nomination dossier, including an internal comparative analysis in the case of a serial nomination and a mandatory external comparative analysis
- managing a property through indicating what is needed to be maintained in order to sustain the Outstanding Universal Value,
- elaborating a management plan,
- conducting a Heritage Impact Assessment in order to effectively evaluate the impact of potential development on the Outstanding Universal Value.

⁴ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/prcycle3/?page=draft&did=5155>

One of the first examples of identifying and listing attributes that justify the criteria and convey the Outstanding Universal Value as a whole is the table developed during the nomination process for the serial transcontinental property “The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier – an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement” inscribed in the World Heritage List in 2016 (Table 1). In the course of the lengthy process the series, which originally consisted of 22 components, was reduced to 17 sites. The format sets out concisely and precisely the relation between criteria and attributes and how the attributes of each component contribute to

Table 1: Attributes of the Architectural Work of Le Corbusier
– an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement ⁵

Component parts of the serial nomination In chronological order	Criterion ii “How the buildings collectively had an exceptional global influence” Important interchange of human values over a span of time: Le Corbusier introduced new architectural and urban concepts which influenced the architectural discourse of the 20th century worldwide. The transnational serial nomination is a built manifest of these new approaches and architectural concepts.			Criterion vi “How the buildings reflect ideas” Intellectually or tangibly, Le Corbusier’s work is strongly connected to the Modern Movement.		
	Attribute A An exceptional interchange of ideas in a global context. Global influence in the development of architecture, planning and their social concepts.			Attribute B Inventing a new aesthetic approach and a new architectural language including the use of light, colour and space.		
	Outstanding global Influence as a “masterpiece”	Strong influence and relation with a part of the world	Crystallization of ideas that had an exceptional global influence: prototype	Plastic innovation	Five Points of a New Architecture	Spatial innovation
1 - Maisons La Roche et Jeanneret, Paris, France, 1923		Worldwide influence, due to publications	The first expression of <i>Purism</i> in architecture	First use of purist polychrome in the interior and the exterior	First use of the <i>Five Points</i> before being published	Introduction of the concept of <i>Promenade architecturale</i>
2 - Petite Villa au bord du lac Léman, Corseaux, Suisse, 1923			The archetype of the ‘minimal house’			Ergonomic and functionalist conception of space

⁵ The tagline was drafted based on the table in the nomination dossier.

Outstanding Universal Value. The proposed criteria (ii) and (vi) are backed by 4 key attributes (A-D) and diversified by 13 further attributes; they are assigned predominantly material, but also intangible, values conveying the SOUV. Since the World Heritage Committee decided to also recognize criterion (i) this table does not perfectly harmonize with the textual version of the final statement; it is nevertheless a good example of the methodological mapping of attributes.

Attribute C Taking up the challenges of replicability: standardization, modelling and industrialization.			Attribute D Answering the question of housing for modern man through ensuring a balance between the individual and the community, aiming at better spaces for a better common life in society.			
Testing of technology and prefabrication	Research on typological standards	Modulor	New living concepts	Minimum housing	Large-scale housing	<i>Athens Charter</i>
System with Concrete beams & columns	Research on Standard furniture		House of an art collector: open-space			
Horizontal windows -“fenêtres en longueur”	Experiments in standards for a one-bay ‘minimal house’		One-bay single-family house. Integration of the landscape through horizontal windows	Research on the maximal space for a minimal surface		

Component parts of the serial nomination In chronological order	Attribute A An exceptional interchange of ideas in a global context. Global influence in the development of architecture, planning and their social concepts.			Attribute B Inventing a new aesthetic approach and a new architectural language including the use of light, colour and space.		
	Outstanding global Influence as a "masterpiece"	Strong influence and relation with a part of the world	Crystallization of ideas that had an exceptional global influence: prototype	Plastic innovation	Five Points of a New Architecture	Spatial innovation
3 - Cité Frugès Pessac, France, 1924			Attempt at Taylorism and industrialisation	Use of purist polychrome at an urban level		Spatial innovations in minimal spaces
4 - Maison Guiette Anvers, Belgique, 1926		Le Corbusier's first commission abroad, based on the Pavillon de L'Esprit Nouveau		Purism: sculptural approach to space		Promenade architecturale, or 4th dimension of space
6 - Villa Savoye et loge du jardinier, Poissy, France, 1928	The absolute Icon of Modern Movement		Manifesto, based on the <i>Five points</i>	Masterpiece of Purism. Sculptural design of the roof-terrace	Principles of the <i>Five points</i> applied at an extremely high level	Ramps, architectural promenade, solar roof-terrace
7 - Immeuble Clarté Genève, Suisse, 1930			The prototype of selected modern housing, derived from the typology of the high-rise urban villa			Façade-to-façade duplex apartments
8 - Immeuble locatif à la Porte Molitor, Boulogne-Billancourt France, 1931			Crystallization of the glazed apartment building			Open plan in the context of an apartment building

Attribute C Taking up the challenges of replicability: standardization, modelling and industrialization.			Attribute D Answering the question of housing for modern man through ensuring a balance between the individual and the community, aiming at better spaces for a better common life in society.			
Testing of technology and prefabrication	Research on typological standards	Modulor	New living concepts	Minimum housing	Large-scale housing	<i>Athens Charter</i>
Free design of façade. Standardisation of the sub trade. Use of the cement gun		Prototype of the standardised city in the 1920's	Typological variations on the basis of a module	Research on minimal housing at a larger scale		
	Individual house inspired by the principles of the Machine à habiter of the Maison Citrohan-model		Typology of the house-workshop, open at several levels			
			Open plan	Gardener's lodge: unique example of the CIAM 1929 minimal house		
Steel frame, assembled by metal arc welding	Typology of the high-rise urban villa		Duplex apartments in a collective building		Model for middle-class apartment building with collective services	
The first apartment building in the world with fully glazed façades			New concept of apartment building with glazed façade; offering the essential pleasures: air, light, sun and views			Standard-type residential apartment building of the Radiant City and the <i>Athens Charter</i>

Component parts of the serial nomination In chronological order	Attribute A An exceptional interchange of ideas in a global context. Global influence in the development of architecture, planning and their social concepts.			Attribute B Inventing a new aesthetic approach and a new architectural language including the use of light, colour and space.		
	Outstanding global Influence as a "masterpiece"	Strong influence and relation with a part of the world	Crystallization of ideas that had an exceptional global influence: prototype	Plastic innovation	Five Points of a New Architecture	Spatial innovation
10 - Manufacture à Saint-Dié, France, 1946			The Prototype of the <i>green factory</i>	One of the earliest examples of brutalist architecture		
11 - Maison du docteur Curutchet, La Plata, Argentine, 1949		Evidence of the international expansion of modern architecture after the 2nd World War			Redefinition and maturity of <i>Five points</i>	Architectural promenade, creating an exceptional succession of perspectives and a dynamic vision of space
12 - Chapelle Notre-Dame du-Haut Ronchamp, France, 1950	Icon of sacred Christian architecture			Model of architecture/sculpture		Relationship between interior and exterior spaces
13 - Cabanon, Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, France, 1951	Total work of art and archetype of the minimum cell		Crystallization of the idea of the minimum cell	Application of the concept of Synthesis of the arts		Functional and ergonomic approach of the minimum space
15 - Couvent Sainte-Marie-de-la-Tourette, Evieux, France, 1953	Synthesis of the Modern Movement		Crystallization of the concept of balance between the individual and the collective housing	Brutalist building: aesthetics of raw concrete	Redefinition of the <i>Five points</i>	Exceptional use of light as an instrument to construct space

Attribute C Taking up the challenges of replicability: standardization, modelling and industrialization.			Attribute D Answering the question of housing for modern man through ensuring a balance between the individual and the community, aiming at better spaces for a better common life in society.			
Testing of technology and prefabrication	Research on typological standards	Modulor	New living concepts	Minimum housing	Large-scale housing	<i>Athens Charter</i>
First application in Europe of the brise-soleil			Model of the Green factory: improving labour conditions			Standard type building in line with the <i>Athens Charter</i>
Innovating systems of ventilation and natural lighting		Use of the Modulor in the whole house				
Light double-shell roof in concrete			New relationship between the body and the sacred			
	Integrated equipment	Entirely based on the Modulor	Research on a standard for a holiday unit	Research on the definition of a minimum cell		
Early use of pre-stressed concrete in a residential and sacred building		Entirely designed based on the Modulor				

Component parts of the serial nomination In chronological order	Attribute A An exceptional interchange of ideas in a global context. Global influence in the development of architecture, planning and their social concepts.			Attribute B Inventing a new aesthetic approach and a new architectural language including the use of light, colour and space.		
	Outstanding global Influence as a "masterpiece"	Strong influence and relation with a part of the world	Crystallization of ideas that had an exceptional global influence; prototype	Plastic innovation	Five Points of a New Architecture	Spatial innovation
17 - Maison de la Culture, Firminy, France, 1955			An innovating programme based on the concepts of the Radiant City and the <i>Athens Charter</i>	An anticipation of modern sculptural shapes and architecture		Complex internal spaces due to the curved lines of the roof and the inclined walls

Identifying and mapping the attributes for a comparative analysis is as important as justifying the Outstanding Universal Value. A good example is the table from the nomination dossier Water Management System of Augsburg, which was inscribed in the World Heritage List in 2019 (Figure 1). All relevant comparative examples are listed in chronological order with their attributes. The differences between the properties are clearly legible, as are the attributes conveying the uniqueness of the nominated property. Unlike Table 1, however, the relationship between the criteria and attributes is not shown, which does not diminish the meaningfulness of a relatively manageable number of attributes and comparative examples. However, in the case of large-scale World Heritage properties such as cultural and historic urban landscapes, it is imperative to relate the criteria and attributes in the heading of the table.

Attribute C Taking up the challenges of replicability: standardization, modelling and industrialization.			Attribute D Answering the question of housing for modern man through ensuring a balance between the individual and the community, aiming at better spaces for a better common life in society.			
Testing of technology and prefabrication	Research on typological standards	Modulor	New living concepts	Minimum housing	Large-scale housing	<i>Athens Charter</i>
Innovative roof structure on steel cables			Spaces providing access to a new democratic approach to art			Standard-type building in line with the <i>Athens Charter</i>

		Country	Place	Water systems					Romans													
		GER	Augsburg	CHN	IRN	OMN	PAK	JOR	ESP	FRA	ITA	LBN	TUN	TUR	Segovia	Merida	Tarraco	Pont du Gard	Cascata	Baalbek	Zaghovan	Aspendos
	Continuity	■		■	■	■	■	□		□	□	□	■	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	□	
	Aquifera	■		■	■	■	■	□		■	□	□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Qanat	□		■	■	■	■	□		□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Sources	■		□	□	□	□	■		□	□	□	■	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	
	Weir	■		□	□	□	□	□		□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Water canals	■		■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
	Aqueduct	■		□	□	□	□	□		■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
	Pumps	■		□	□	□	□	□		□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Water towers	■		□	□	□	□	□		□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Pressure pumps	■		□	□	□	□	■		□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Drinking water	■		□	□	□	□	□		□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Drinking water pumps	■		□	□	□	□	□		□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Division of drinking and river water	■		□	□	□	□	□		□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Waterwheels for power	■		□	□	□	□	□		□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Waterturbines for power	■		□	■	□	□	□		□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Waterframes for power	■		□	□	□	□	□		□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Industrial, electric and power generation	■		□	□	□	□	□		□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	□	
	Irrigation	□		□	□	□	□	■		□	□	□	■	□	□	□	□	□	■	□	■	
Begin		12.C.AD		2.C.BC	5.C.BC	5.C.BC	2.C.BC	1.C.BC	1.C.AD	1.C.BC	1.C.BC	1.C.BC	3.C.BC	3.C.BC	2.C.AD	2.C.BC						
End		●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	●	●	○						

●

 = active

○

 = closed down

● = active
○ = closed down

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Figure 1: Attributes of the Water Management System of Augsburg

There is a good example for heading a comprehensive mapping of attributes or a compressed table, which sums up the Outstanding Universal Value and the criteria. The German World Heritage coordinating body in the Federal Foreign Office has created a format in order to guide the implementation of the *ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural*

Table 2 : Brief Synthesis: Attributes, Integrity and Authenticity

Brief Synthesis: Attributes, Integrity and Authenticity													
State Party:													
Property:													
Category of property: classification according Article 1 of the World Heritage Convention as well as paragraph 47 and annex 3 of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the case of cultural landscapes													
		Integrity			Authenticity								
		wholeness- intactness											
		structural	functional	visual	form and design	materials and substance	use and function	Traditions, techniques and management systems	location and setting	language, and other forms of intangible heritage	spirit and feeling	other internal and external factors	
Key attributes (max. 5, as defined in the OUV)													
Key attribute													
Key attribute													
Key attribute													
Key attribute													
Key attribute													
Criteria of the World Heritage property	Criterion (i): Masterpiece	Attributes (max. 10, assigned to relevant criteria)											
	Criterion (ii): Values/Influences Attribute(s)												
	Criterion (iii): Testimony Attribute(s)												
	Criterion (iv): Typology Attribute(s)												
	Criterion (v): Land-Use Attribute(s)												
	Criterion (vi): Associations Attribute(s)												

Attributes of World Heritage Outstanding Universal Value¹



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¹ The author expresses his sincere acknowledgement to Ms. Christina Cameron, to Mr Karim Hendili and to Mr Mohamed Ziane Bouziane for their review of the first draft of this paper.

“Attributes” in texts: Mentions and gaps

An attribute is “a quality or feature of somebody or something” (Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries online). In the World Heritage documents (see References), however, this word is not defined. It is not even mentioned in the *World Heritage Convention* text, and was also absent from the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (henceforth, OG) until the beginning of the 21st century. In fact, it was only in the 2005 edition of the OG that Outstanding Universal Value (henceforth, OUV) is defined for the first time (paragraphs 49-53). Nevertheless, while defining OUV, the OG do not provide a definition of “attribute” or “attributes.” The latter appears elsewhere in the 2005 edition of the OG (paragraphs 82, 83, 85, 88, 100, 104, and 137(b)).

Paragraph 82 provides a list of attributes (see Section 2 below). Obviously, the list is not exhaustive, and specific attributes might be identified and defined according to each site. These attributes are exclusively linked to cultural heritage; the conditions of integrity has been extended to cultural properties while the conditions of authenticity are exclusively applied to cultural ones. This paragraph could have been written more clearly to aid understanding.

Paragraph 83 explains the significance of the attribute “spirit and feeling,” which might be difficult to understand. Further elaboration on this topic could have helped to clarify its meaning.

Paragraph 85 uses the expression “attributes of authenticity.” This is the only occurrence of this expression in the OG compared to the more common one, “conditions of authenticity,” which is used six times. Therefore, the attributes to determine the OUV (and not the authenticity) of a property and assess the state of conservation demonstrate to what extent a property meets the “conditions of authenticity” (as well as the “conditions of integrity”).

Paragraph 88 defines integrity as “a measure of the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes.” Whereas the paragraph 82 provides a list of attributes for cultural properties, no specific attributes are given for natural sites. Therefore, it is not clear whether the use of “attributes” in this paragraph refers to cultural or natural heritage or both. Obviously, it might be more difficult to make a once-and-for all list of “attributes” for natural properties: the seasonal migration of birds, for example. Yet, a set of these specific attributes needs to be clearly identified while taking into account the variables specific to particular species or other changing features.

Paragraph 100 states that “all those areas and attributes which are a direct tangible

expression of the outstanding universal value of the property” should be included when drawing its boundaries. This is again required exclusively for cultural properties. It should also be noted that the “attributes” are *directly* linked to the OUV without transiting through authenticity.

Paragraph 104 deals with the buffer zone that surrounds the property and is deemed necessary to provide additional protection to it. Its delimitation should include “the immediate setting of the nominated property, important views and other areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection.” This set of “attributes” is specific to the buffer zone. However, no indication is given so as to differentiate those attributes expressing the potential OUV of the nominated property as such and those attributes that may exist in the buffer zone. Ultimately, the buffer zone is designed not to hold attributes that carry the OUV but to absorb external pressures that may threaten the World Heritage property. That said, it should be mentioned that, in addition to the attributes that carry the OUV of a World Heritage property, there might be other potential attributes within the property, including the ones located in the buffer zone.

Paragraph 137(b) is dedicated to serial properties in which the components should be linked and contribute to the OUV, including through “intangible attributes.”

What is a World Heritage “attribute?”

In the 2005 edition of the OG, the word “attributes” (always used in the plural form²) appears for the first time. There are eight occurrences of this word in the paragraphs mentioned above (82, 83, 85, 88, 100, 104, 137(b)). In addition, the word is mentioned once in each of the Annex 4 on *Authenticity in relation to the World Heritage Convention* and Annex 5 on the *Format for nomination of properties for inscription on the World Heritage List*.

However, as mentioned above, the word “attributes” has not been defined by the OG ever until its addition to this text in the 2005 edition. The paragraphs in which it is mentioned have never been amended since then and the revised 2019 edition maintains the same wording, although the set of attributes listed in paragraph 82 provides a somewhat hollow definition:

“Depending on the type of cultural heritage, and its cultural context, properties may be understood to meet the conditions of authenticity if their cultural value (as recognized in

² Even though, on a theoretical basis, a property’s OUV may be expressed by a single attribute.

the nomination criteria proposed) are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes including:

- form and design;
- materials and substance;
- use and function;
- traditions, techniques and management systems;
- location and setting;
- language, and other forms of intangible heritage;
- spirit and feeling; and
- other internal and external factors.”

In fact, the “attributes” are those features that make a nominated property meet the “conditions of authenticity.” The majority of these attributes are clearly linked to cultural features even if some others may be interpreted broadly in a way that could include natural properties as well. Therefore, “attributes” are not invoked in relation to natural sites, except once in Annex 5 of the OG. The *Format for nomination of properties for inscription on the World Heritage List* (Section 2.a. *Description of property*) states that: “In the case of a natural property[,] the account should deal with important physical attributes, geology, habitats, species and population size, and other significant ecological features and processes. Species lists should be provided where practicable, and the presence of threatened or endemic taxa should be highlighted.” (OG, 2019, p. 99).

Moreover, in paragraphs 154-157, the Statement of the OUV following an inscription decision by the World Heritage Committee does not mention the “attributes” of the inscribed property. This makes it difficult to know what are the material and intangible features of the property that might be subject to monitoring and periodic reporting by the State party’s competent authorities and other stakeholders concerned. Obviously, the inscribed property’s attributes are a sort of red line that one can identify in many parts of a nomination, from the site description to the justification for nomination to the proposed criteria to OUV and to site management. Still, a reminder of clearly expressed attributes would be more than welcome in the inscription decision by the World Heritage Committee.

Attributes and indicators

There might be confusion between “attributes” and “indicators” with respect to World Heritage properties since, as mentioned above, the “attributes” of a nominated or inscribed property are not defined. Neither are the “indicators.” Paragraph 83 states that: “Attributes such as spirit and feeling do not lend themselves easily to practical applications of the conditions of authenticity, but nevertheless are important indicators of character and sense of place, (...)” In this paragraph, “attributes” and “indicators” seem to be interchangeable synonyms. Elsewhere in the OG, “indicators,” “key indicators” and “monitoring indicators” are used when explaining how to assess the state of conservation of a property, including when preparing a new nomination or a periodic report on an inscribed property (paragraphs 132.6 and 205, and Annexes 5 and 7).

Therefore, clear definitions are needed for both words in the context of the *World Heritage Convention*. These definitions should separate their meanings and, at the same time, link “attributes” with “indicators” while identifying the OUV of a nominated property or while assessing the state of conservation of an inscribed one. A proposal is made in the following section of this paper.

Methodology for identifying, defining and monitoring OUV attributes and indicators

The following Table 1 is intended to allow for the identification, definition and monitoring of OUV attributes and corresponding indicators on site. It is based on the features enumerated in the OG. The first column contains the attributes as expressed in paragraph 82. Each attribute is broadly defined in the second column, and in the third one, each attribute has specific indicators that can be identified or assessed on the ground. The fourth column is for assessing the degree of authenticity expressed by each attribute (compared to the inscription year, in the case of an inscribed property). Table 1 is designed for application to cultural heritage sites. It may be extended to natural properties.

Table 1: Grid for the identification and the monitoring of the attributes of World heritage properties

Attribute	Definition of the attribute	Indicators of the attribute	Degree of authenticity expressed by the attribute ³
Form and design	Overall form and design of the property	Area of the property	Any change in the area
	Specific characteristics of the property (volume, components, height)	Volume of the property	Any change in the volume
		Number of components and sub-components	Any change in the number of components and sub-components
		Authorized and actual height	Any difference between the authorized and the actual height
Materials and substance	Types of materials forming the structure of the property	Original materials	Percentage remaining
	Typology of tangible specific elements and/or accessories of the property	Number of tangible specific elements and accessories	Percentage remaining
Use and function	Use and function of the property	Functions	Proportion of components maintaining their original function
	Use and function of specific components and sub-components	Uses	Proportion of components with different use

³ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2005). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, paragraph 85. This column (and the whole Table) may be extended to “integrity” in order to include natural properties.

Attribute	Definition of the attribute	Indicators of the attribute	Degree of authenticity expressed by the attribute ³
Traditions, techniques and management systems	Federal/national legislation, regulations, traditions, techniques and management systems	Application, respect and monitoring of domestic laws, regulations, traditions, techniques and management systems	Level of conformity with domestic laws, regulations, traditions, techniques and management systems
	Management by communities	Mechanisms of community participation in property management	Assessment of community participation in property management
Location and setting	Location of the property in its area	Limits	The limits are in place
	Setting of the property	Contiguity	The contiguous elements are the same
		Respect of easements	To what extent the easements are respected
	Views from and of the property	Views from the property towards the surroundings	Views are unobstructed
		Views of the property from “strategic” points	Views are unobstructed

Attribute	Definition of the attribute	Indicators of the attribute	Degree of authenticity expressed by the attribute ³
Language, and other forms of intangible heritage	Language	Language(s) used by local communities, among NGOs and heritage professionals	The language(s) is(are) the same
	Intangible heritage specific to the property and/or to local communities living in or around it	Toponyms	Toponyms are preserved
		Intangible heritage associated with the property	Intangible heritage safeguarded
Spirit and feeling	Spirit of place and impression that emerges from an overview of the property	Spirit of place and impression	Spirit and impression are in place
		Feeling Sounds, scents	Appreciation of feeling Appreciation of sounds and scents
Other internal and external factors	Specific internal and external factors, if any	Specific indicators	Appreciation

Table 1 clarifies and helps define the attributes of the nominated site or the World Heritage property as identified in the OG (paragraph 82)⁴. There is a difference between the first set of three attributes and the subsequent four. The former can be expressed in quantitative indicators such as the number of private houses or public buildings in a

⁴ The proposed Table 1 goes beyond the table with questions in UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN (2011) *Preparing World Heritage Nominations*, pp. 63-64 (see References). The words “change,” “volume,” “proportion,” “percentage” and “same” used in Table 1 should be assessed with regard to their potential impact on the OUV. For example, a minor revision of the property’s limits might not be necessarily interpreted as a negative impact.

historic city (Form and design), the proportion of original and new materials (Materials and substance), and the balance between “original functions” and “new uses” (Use and function). The second set of attributes is expressed in qualitative indicators (Management systems; Situation and setting; Language, and other forms of intangible heritage; Spirit and impression). The last attribute cannot be interpreted in Table 1 as it is likely to be specific to each property. It has to be evaluated according to the assessment arguments put forward in the nomination or in the state of conservation report.

Concerted work on the procedures for identifying, defining and monitoring the OUV attributes should be undertaken regularly with the participation of the concerned stakeholders. Through awareness-raising towards local communities as well as consultations, media campaigns, cultural events or exhibitions, this work should be addressed through an inclusive approach. The objective is that the various stakeholders, including local communities, are sufficiently aware of the preparation of a new nomination or of the regular assessment work of the attributes that carry the OUV in a World Heritage property.

The attributes that carry the OUV are assessed in situ on the basis of quantitative and qualitative indicators. This work should be coordinated by the body in charge of the World Heritage property, in consultation with the stakeholders concerned. Evaluation of the attributes is based on mapping work, making it possible to precisely locate the points to be checked in three categories, from well (green) and moderately (orange) to less (red) protected attributes. On this basis, a scheduled strategy of intervention is set up according to the urgency and scope of work to be undertaken. The state of conservation reports serve as the basis for rigorously monitoring the property as well as for preparing the compulsory periodic report that States Parties must submit to UNESCO every six years.

Recommendations

Following evaluation of the issue of the attributes that carry the OUV in Word heritage nominations and properties, the OG might be amended. Obviously, some areas of this document need clarification:

1. **Discuss the proposed Table 1 as a basis for a framework to be added to the OG:**
Attributes and indicators should be included in a form that assists site managers and other stakeholders while preparing nominations for inscription or assessing the state of

conservation of World Heritage properties.

2. **Clarify the issue of OUV attributes:** The OUV attributes need to be clearly defined in the OG. Thus, it is recommended to link the OUV with the attributes in the OG (paragraphs 49-53). This linkage should help those who are preparing a nomination and those who regularly undertake state-of-conservation reports, including while preparing periodic reports, to be aware of what is needed. The attributes on which the OUV is based should be clearly defined and described⁵. Each attribute needs to be assessed with reference to specific indicators, either quantitative or qualitative or both. To this end, “indicators” should also be defined.
3. **Extend the attributes to natural properties⁶ for better protection of the OUV:** A similar framework should be dedicated to natural heritage properties. It may assist those who are preparing nominations and those who assess the state of conservation to have tools in hand that clarify the exact status of the property at a given moment. The same tools should help in measuring the gap between departure and arrival situations.
4. **Recall the property attributes once inscribed in the OG (paragraphs 154-157):** As already mentioned, the attributes are not clearly stated or recalled in the inscription decision. This is likely to clarify not only what has been inscribed but also the attributes on which the OUV is based, and should be henceforth under control.

References

- UNESCO. (1972). *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage*.
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2019 and earlier versions since 1977). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.
- UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN. (2011). *Preparing World Heritage Nominations (Second edition)*.

⁵ There is a short definition in the manual: “Attributes are aspects of a property which are associated with or express the Outstanding Universal Value. Attributes can be tangible or intangible,” *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁶ The manual suggests that while it is more common of to speak of “features” for natural properties, the word “attributes” is also used. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Attributes: A Seemingly Useful but Puzzling Concept



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The concept of “attributes” in the World Heritage context is tricky to me. It seems quite straightforward and comprehensible, at first; yet, it turns out to be confusing when trying to apply the concept to actual cases.

My understanding of “attributes” is basically in accordance with what is described in *“Preparing World Heritage Nominations”* (2011, UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM and IUCN). Attributes are the tangible or intangible elements that convey the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the heritage property in question. They are what bridges the OUV—abstract and invisible—with actual material or immaterial evidence on the ground, which is visible. The attributes are “vital to understanding the property’s authenticity and integrity, and are the focus of protection, conservation and management.” Therefore, they should give site managers good clues as to what is and what is not permissible.

The best example which helped me to understand the concept is the case of the Dresden Elbe Valley, which was removed from the World Heritage List in 2009. Although to the best of my knowledge its attributes had not been clearly defined, this property had been “defined as a continuing cultural landscape” whose panoramic vista had shown its historical “layers from different periods, mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries. Through these interventions the meadows and river sides were kept free of constructions and the essential qualities of the landscape were established(.)”¹ A four-lane bridge that obliterated the view was subsequently built, and was deemed to have decisively damaged the property’s integrity, which led to the World Heritage Committee’s historic decision to delete it from the List. In other words, if the panoramic landscape was not its attribute, then having a new bridge running right through the scenery might not necessarily have been considered such crucial damage to the OUV, and the property might still be on the List.

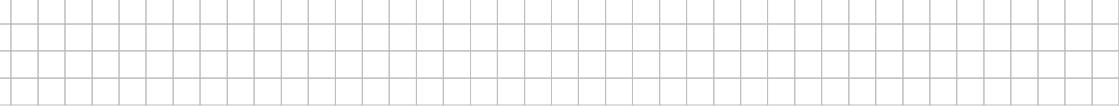
However, when one tries to apply the same principle to some other concrete cases, it becomes more confusing rather than simpler. In theory, a property’s cultural value should be expressed through one or more categories of attributes listed in paragraph 82 of the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. In the case of the Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded-Tombs of Ancient Japan, which is the nomination in which I was involved, the team comprising local and national government officials and heritage experts defined that the OUV of the property is expressed in its form and design, and the material and abundant archaeological movable and immovable objects. They also elaborated the attributes into phrases, namely: 1) a wide range of types

¹ ICOMOS. (2004). Evaluations of Cultural Properties. WHC-04/28.COM/INF. 14A. Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

of mounded tombs grouped together; 2) four standardized plan types; and 3) evidence of elaborate and distinctive funeral rituals. While they make sense as proof of authenticity, when it comes to the attributes' function as the guidepost for management and conservation, it is not so clear-cut. The property consists of 49 mounded tombs, but these attributes can stand independently from the number of components. Theoretically speaking, even if the property loses one or more tombs, its integrity can remain "unharmd."

Another example that confounds me is that the term is sometimes used in a more abstract way. It is found in the "Guidance and Capacity Building for the Recognition of Associative Values using World Heritage Criterion (vi)," Final Report. While that report clearly states the attributes in paragraph 16 as "(...) Clear identification of a property's attributes is an essential step towards effective values-based management to maintain the site's OUV," the attributes of properties listed in Annex 1 "Sites using criterion (vi) organized by association" are historical events, concepts, ideas and the like. For instance, the attributes of Robben Island (South Africa) are described as "Symboliz[ing] the triumph of the human spirit, of freedom and of democracy over oppression." I do not quite understand how this abstract "attribute" serves as the focus of protection, conservation and management actions. Isn't an attribute an actual monument, building, landscape etc. on the ground that conveys the site's memory, rather than the memory itself? How can one protect an idea?

As described above, "attributes" seem quite simple, but this is not necessarily the case when trying to apply them to actual situations, especially to serial property or property with criterion (vi). This may be all the more so when it involves translation into a non-European language like Japanese, because the term "*zokusei*," which is a direct translation of "attribute," does not evoke the same connotation as the original term. Therefore, I am hopeful that the booklet on this subject, being produced as an initiative of the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, will help experts and other stakeholders to clarify the discrepancies in current understanding, and build a common understanding as well.



Metaheritage—Beyond the Historic Centre and Ensemble¹



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The metaphysical ontologies of attributes

In the world of Western philosophy, attributes became part of the theological debate at the end of the 16th Century CE with Renee Descartes identifying a single meta-attribute to substance. They are understood relative to one another, in terms of ontological dependence. This was challenged by the Spinozian theory of multiple attributes to a single substance in the form of pantheism—linking culture and nature.

“Proposition X. It is, then, far from an absurdity to ascribe several attributes to one substance: for nothing in nature is more clear than that each and every entity must be conceived under some attribute, and that its reality or being is in proportion to the number of its attributes expressing necessity or eternity and infinity.

Definition IV. By *attribute*, I mean that which the intellect perceives as constituting the essence of substance.” (Spinoza, 1996).

Spinoza’s definition is essential for illustrating and amplifying the ontology of attributes of the *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO, 2019) as they become an important factor in understanding values of the ethereal, especially in their representation.

Paragraph 83 of the *Operational Guidelines* indicates that:

“Attributes such as spirit and feeling do not lend themselves easily to practical applications of the conditions of authenticity, but nevertheless are important indicators of character and sense of place, for example, in communities maintaining tradition and cultural continuity.”

Here, in Hindu philosophy, the *prakriti* (nature, environment) refers to primal matter (spirit and feeling) with three different innate qualities, *tri-guna* (three attributes/qualities), whose equilibrium is the basis of all observed empirical reality (Lochtefeld, 2001). The *prakriti* is a system of pure awareness and metaphysical consciousness with *tri-guna* classified further into *sattva* (goodness, constructive, harmonious), *rajas* (action, passion, creation), and *tamas* (darkness, destructive, chaotic). In the study of human behavior, *guna* means personality, innate nature and psychological attributes of an individual or a society as a whole. This philosophy mainly asserts the UNESCO attributes of the intangible, of spirit and feeling to be articulated within the overarching connections of nature and culture

vis-à-vis *prakriti*. These *tri-guna* attributes can be exemplified with intangible attributes of World Heritage properties and the Intangible Heritage of Humanity² having Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) that is transcendental and metaphysical with direct implications to criterion (vi)³.

- ***Sattva guna* (goodness, constructive, harmonious):**

- Nalanda Mahavihara, India, as a centre for higher learning marks the zenith in the evolution of sangharama (monastic establishment) into the earliest higher-learning establishment of early medieval India. Its merit-based approach is said to have embraced all contemporary sources of knowledge and systems of learning practiced in the Indian subcontinent.
- The Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines of Nara, Japan, demonstrate the continuing spiritual power and influence of these religions in an exceptional manner.

- ***Rajas guna* (action, passion, creation):**

- Khangchedzonga National Park, India, is the heartland of a multi-ethnic culture which has evolved over time, giving rise to a multi-layered syncretic religious tradition, is the central element of the socio-religious order, of the unity and solidarity of the ethnically very diverse Sikkimese communities.

- ***Tamas guna* (darkness, destructive, chaotic):**

- The Hiroshima Peace Memorial, Japan, is a stark and powerful symbol of the achievement of world peace for more than half a century following the unleashing of the most destructive force ever created by humankind.
- Discontinuity of intangible heritage if out of harmony with the present-day order, viz. removal of the Carnival of Aalst, Belgium by UNESCO as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2019 amid controversy over the use of anti-Semitic stereotypes during the carnival and in its promotional materials.

The evidence of the past and cultural continuity aids in generating a new language to further synthesize the tangible and intangible, the real and virtual. These may include:

² The texts are quoted from the relevant inscriptions on the UNESCO website.

³ Criteria (vi): to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.

- experiences of space and place
- traditional knowledge
- art, music, theatre and literature
- history re-enactment, tradition and memory
- pilgrimages and journeys
- processions and carnivals
- icons and ornaments.

The Hindu *tri-guna* may provide a new dimension for the intangible attributes which are also clearly echoed in Shinto philosophy.

Evolution of attributes and Operational Guidelines:

The *World Heritage Convention*'s (UNESCO, 1972) defining cultural heritage as 'monuments,' 'groups of buildings' and 'sites' does not lend itself to identifying values of urban heritage where the form and landscapes are critical elements. However, the evolution and modifications in the list of attributes in the *Operational Guidelines* shows a shift from the materiality of the monuments to qualities of place, both physical and spiritual and including setting and context⁴.

The four attributes in the original document of 1977 included design, materials, workmanship and setting. Subsequent to the *Nara Document* (ICOMOS, 1994) and the various World Heritage Committee working groups, a new set of attributes was adopted in 2005. This was the same year of the debate on 'World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture,' taking into account the emotional connection between human beings and their environment, their sense of place, being fundamental to guarantee an urban environmental quality of living, and adoption of the *Vienna Memorandum*. The debate was echoed at ICOMOS with the *Xian Declaration on the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas* (ICOMOS, 2005).

Building on these deliberations, the *Recommendations on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL Recommendation)* (UNESCO, 2011) were a result of a series of experts' meetings where the wider context and setting was defined. The *HUL Recommendation* underlined the

⁴ List of attributes: form and **design**; **materials** and substance; **workmanship**; use and function; *mass and scale*; *colour and texture*; *grain and vegetation* (views and spatial patterns, flora and fauna); traditions, techniques and management systems; location and **setting**; language, and other forms of intangible heritage; spirit and feeling; and other internal and external factors. *Operational Guidelines: 1977 in bold*, 2005 in normal; *HUL guidelines in italics* and Cultural Landscapes underlined.

need for considering spaces, places and time beyond the narrow analysis of the individual monument or groups of buildings. Paragraphs 8 and 9 clearly list a new set of some 17 attributes:

Paragraph 8. The historic urban landscape is the urban area understood as the result of a historic layering of cultural and natural values and attributes, extending beyond the notion of ‘historic centre’ or ‘ensemble’ to include the broader urban context and its geographical setting.

Paragraph 9. This wider context includes notably the sites’:
topography, geomorphology, hydrology and natural features, its built environment, both historic and contemporary, its infrastructures above and below ground, its open spaces and gardens, its land use patterns and spatial organization, perceptions and visual relationships, as well as all other elements of the urban structure.
It also includes social and cultural practices and values, economic processes and the intangible dimensions of heritage as related to diversity and identity.

Paragraph 10. This definition provides the basis for a comprehensive and integrated approach for the identification, assessment, conservation and management of historic urban landscapes within an overall sustainable development framework.

Based on this, it was further recommended that mass and scale, colour and texture would be added to the attributes of the *Operational Guidelines*, but the World Heritage Committee working group opined that the existing terms include everything and saw no need to make further modifications. Since then, more attributes have been considered with respect to cultural landscapes with grain and vegetation, views and spatial patterns, flora and fauna. All this renewed the reflections on setting and context, and the role of buffer zones, providing for an ‘added layer of protection’ to the defined OUVs.

Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape

While the OUVs are defined within the criteria of the *Operational Guidelines*, as an urban subset it is dynamic, continuously evolving, and considers many other aspects of the cities, including their layering and continuity, emerging technologies, resilience and sustainability,

traditions and pilgrimages. These create new attributes that may assist in evaluating the true composite values of universal and local significance. In the *Nara Document* (ICOMOS, 1994), the cultural continuum between communities that had generated the heritage and those that currently care for and protect it, reallocates responsibilities which may lead to a congruence or dissonance of values. These individual or collective values, governed by time, place and people, have their own rights extending the meaning of communities beyond their physical boundaries in the digital world.

The 2020 Fukuoka workshop⁵ noted that the *HUL Recommendation* lists urban attributes in paragraphs 8 and 9 while generating indicative elements/typologies, recommending that each locality have its own list of attributes that may inform the description of local significance and that captures its unique identity. It was also noted that “These are attributes that promote harmony and continuity throughout the historic urban area rather than breaks or ruptures.” (Agency for Cultural Affairs, Kyushu University, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM, 2020). The attributes were grouped under wider context, urban elements, monuments/buildings and elements of intangible cultural heritage, with specific reference to the *UNESCO 2003 Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage*.

These distinctive characteristics have been identified in many national-level policies and notably by projects funded by the European Commission. The Heritage as Opportunity (HerO) launched under URBACT in 2009 aimed at developing a methodology for designing integrated management plans that include local stakeholders and citizens (Cody & Siravo, 2019, p. 551). The evolution and adoption of these enhanced sets of attributes in national and international policies has broadened the scope for protection and conservation practices as well as provided monitoring mechanisms at all levels.

Steps towards a balanced World Heritage List

The ICOMOS gap analysis (ICOMOS, 2005) was seen as a contribution to the further development of the Global Strategy for a credible, representative and balanced World Heritage List⁶. It was prepared under three frameworks: typological, chronological-regional and thematic. Urban heritage was defined by the following factors:

- geographical

⁵ Co-sponsored in January 2020 by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Japan and Kyushu University, Fukuoka, Japan in cooperation with the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS and ICCROM.

- regional and chronological
- with the diversity of uses (e.g. religious, civil or military), and
- thematic analysis (e.g. cultural landscapes, urban centres).

The definitions of Annex 3 in the *Operational Guidelines* were also evoked with four sub-categories:

- Towns which are typical of a specific period or culture
- Towns that have evolved along characteristic lines and have been preserved
- Historic centres that cover exactly the same area as ancient cities or towns and are now enclosed within modern cities, and
- Sectors, areas or isolated units.

While the document has receded into the historical archives, there is an urgent need to update the content and add revised groupings and categories allowing for a more consistent geo-cultural analysis and a global thesaurus and for understanding historical eras, bridging the Crusaders and Almohads, the Han dynasty and Maya civilisations and the European Renaissance and Ming dynasty.

The 2015 unpublished Urban Heritage Study (Turner, et al., 2015) uncovered inconsistencies in the descriptions of urban heritage as inscribed on the World Heritage List. Terms such as port or coastal cities, trading or merchant cities, religious, pilgrimage and sacred cities, military, fortified and walled cities, tied towns especially in mining, colonial towns and university and capital cities were all used randomly. These may become a new set of thematic attributes.

Acknowledging change for improved mechanisms and tools for management

Extending attributes to be better defined, acknowledged and addressed, changing values presents us with new challenges, which are opportunities for an improved monitoring system to manage the ever-evolving city fabric in the dramatic socio-economic transformations of our cities. To improve the management of urban heritage, there is a need to identify a series

⁶ This analysis was a response to an invitation from the World Heritage Committee at its 24th Session in Cairns (2000) to: “proceed with an analysis of sites inscribed on the World Heritage List and the Tentative List on a regional, chronological, geographical and thematic basis.”

of attributes and associated values of all stakeholders.

Historical sites and cities are spaces within a landscape and a product of agents of change and community or collectivity of a group (Lefebvre, 1992) making it spatially heterogeneous (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986). The increasing challenges of adaptive reuse and gentrified historic urban areas highlight the fact that if the value of heritage was related to its use, a change in the use would indicate a loss of value. However, other sets of values and the multiple attributes, with reference to Spinoza's philosophy, are a guide to managing change. Many social and political transformations are responses to the recurring changes in the cultural values typical of modern society (Rochon, 2000). These are identified as three modes of cultural changes:

- **Value conversion:** The replacement of existing cultural values with new ones
- **Value creation:** The development of new ideas to apply to new situations
- **Value connection:** The development of a conceptual link between phenomena previously thought unconnected or connected in a different way.

Moreover, the *Burra Charter* (Australian National Committee of ICOMOS, 2013) accepts the changing roles and values over time - beliefs (standards), which have significance for a cultural group or an individual, often including, but not being limited to, spiritual, political, religious and moral beliefs and places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups, and values are continually renegotiated.

Computation and datascaping as digital tools and new methods for identification and management of attributes

The multiplicity of information and the data on the attributes can be better managed through the consideration of new emerging digital tools that understand computer attributes as metadata and datascaping methods as visual representations of quantifiable data (Amoroso, 2010) that govern management and planning mechanisms. In computing systems, an attribute is a specification that defines a property of an object, element, or file and whereby the attributes should be considered metadata.

“... However, in actual usage, the term attribute can and is often treated as equivalent to a property depending on the technology being discussed. An attribute of an object usually consists of a name and a value; of an element, a type or class name; of a file, a name and extension.”

Referencing the HerO project, in many historical urban areas, the layering and continuity are characterized by eight fields of action:., (Cody & Siravo, 2019) tangible cultural heritage and tourism economic development, housing, mobility, urban planning and development, environment and leisure and awareness raising research. This cultural ecosystem of the historic cities requires a complex dataset of identifiable, multi-dimensional and verifiable parameters being mapped through engaging digital tools of Geographic Information Systems and Geo-design. This will also help to prepare effective comparative analyses and possibly develop serial nominations for World Heritage and historic urban networks for cultural heritage, tourism and social communities.

Developing such a system will require the adoption of data-science computing skills and protocols, possibly applying the Dublin Core⁷ which provides fifteen basic components of information relevant to documentation. A series of data sets could be developed, including place, people, time and other categories and themes of urban heritage grouping the attributes that have been identified in this paper. For instance, a data set on ‘author’ would allow for diverse groups and stakeholders to weigh the relevant values according to their own scales and data modification would allow entering information as to the effects of population change, land values and mobility patterns according to date. This system of computer modelling can be termed as a more technologically advanced feature of cultural mapping, where the values and attributes are two complementary aspects integrated within a visual representation. This was already identified as a *Referential Analysis for continuity*⁸ where seven component parts were proposed: geomancy – tracings – visual axis, landscape structure, landmarks, heritage, ceremony – ritual, symbols as metaphors and identity. Most importantly, there is a need to integrate this information beyond the historic centre and ensemble to contain setting and context integrating heritage in the life of the community and balancing social, economic and environmental interests.

⁷ The Dublin Core™ Metadata Initiative, or ‘DCMI,’ is an organization that supports innovation in metadata design and best practices across the metadata ecology.

⁸ Referential Analysis, Turner 1981.

Conclusions:

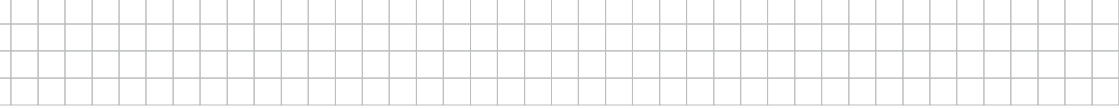
The endorsement of the *New Urban Agenda* (Habitat III Secretariat, 2017) accentuates the need for sustainable leveraging of natural and cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, in cities and human settlements through integrated urban and territorial policies. This theory is built on the *HUL Recommendation* (UNESCO, 2010) asserting the adaptation of a cultural ecosystem approach to ensure integration of cultural heritage policies and planning concerns for sustainable and inclusive methods for urban heritage management.

The complexities of urban heritage and the associated tangible and intangible elements need a more dynamic classification of attributes to include those that are also of local significance. This is elaborated through metaphysical ontologies, religious philosophies as well as scientific principles accentuating the recognition of attributes supported by various texts, theories, charters and documents available as enumerated in this text and bringing theory into practice. By facilitating and improving management and monitoring of the setting and context of the historic centre and ensemble, tools and mechanisms for supporting culture for sustainable development will be available, through measurable attributes. This is vital in decision-making processes where the socio-economic transformations and spatial heterogeneity of spaces within the landscape exert new pressures on older ensembles and where urban revitalisation is desirable. The wider contexts of the metropolis as a historic urban landscape presents an opportunity to include the multiple identities of each individual, community, and neighbourhood providing a mesh of information, which can be represented in quantifiable visual formats by aggregating new boundaries.

Furthermore, the interlinking of data sets of attributes and digital technology to fill the gaps of management practices is desirable and requires further research to define the role of heritage in multi-cultural urban areas. Acceptance of the role it plays (or could play) in local living and identity is to place heritage in the life of the community. There should also be evaluations of the efficacy of different interventions, with the aim of upgrading city infrastructure and safeguarding the heritage to make the city ‘safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable.’

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Attributes in World Heritage – past, present, future?



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“When I use a word,” Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, “it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.” “The question is,” said Alice, “whether you can make words mean so many different things.” “The question is,” said Humpty Dumpty, “which is to be master—that’s all.”¹

Introduction

Organisations can often behave like the English nursery rhyme character Humpty Dumpty and assume a particular word will mean what they want it to mean. This is fairly common in any large and complicated bureaucracy and is certainly true of UNESCO and of World Heritage. A number of terms in common use in the World Heritage context, including authenticity and integrity, not to mention Outstanding Universal Value, have very specific and specialised meanings which can be difficult to understand and to apply in practice. ‘Attribute’ has arguably acquired not one, but two specialist meanings in the World Heritage context.

This article discusses the background and development of these two meanings and explores what might be done to make their application in the work of the *World Heritage Convention* more straightforward and easier to understand. As a starting point, it is helpful to recall that ‘attribute’ can be both a verb and a noun.

Within the World Heritage context, ‘attribute’ is used primarily as a noun, though one of the key documents helping to set World Heritage policy on authenticity – the 1994 *Nara Document on Authenticity*² – uses the verb form several times. It is first used in an official UNESCO document in 2005 in the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*, where it was strongly associated with the concept of authenticity.

While the *Operational Guidelines* are the primary location of guidance on implementation of the *Convention*, they are supported by other guidance, some published by UNESCO such as the World Heritage Resource Manuals³, and some published by the *Convention’s* Advisory Bodies, such as the 2011 ICOMOS *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessment*⁴. This paper focuses very much on the development of the use of ‘attribute’ as evidenced by the *Operational Guidelines*, but also draws on the other guidance. On occasion other guidance has been in advance of the *Guidelines* because the latter are not revised annually.

¹ Lewis Carroll. (1871). *Through the Looking Glass and what Alice did there*. London.

² ICOMOS. (1994). *The Nara Document on Authenticity*. Paris: ICOMOS

³ See <http://whc.unesco.org/en/resourcemanuals/>

⁴ ICOMOS. (2011). *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*.

The concept of authenticity within the *World Heritage Convention*

Authenticity is an important concept for cultural World Heritage properties. From the second edition of the *Operational Guidelines*⁵ in October 1977, authenticity has been seen as an essential qualifier or test for cultural World Heritage properties which, as well as having Outstanding Universal Value, must also have authenticity and, since 2005, integrity, and also effective protection and management. From the outset, authenticity has been seen as necessary to establish that the evidence for Outstanding Universal Value is credible or truthful. In those early years, the concept of authenticity was very physical and very much in line with the *Venice Charter*, which in its turn very much reflected the European approach to conservation of archaeological sites, monuments, and historic buildings⁶. The rubric in the *Operational Guidelines* from 1977 to 1992 read:

*Meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship and setting*⁷

From 1994, this text changed to include coverage of the cultural landscape category, adopted by the World Heritage Committee in that year. It now read:

*Meet the test of authenticity in design, materials, workmanship or setting and in the case of cultural landscapes their distinctive character and components*⁸

This was still very much based within the European conservation tradition apart from the addition of cultural landscapes. A further change was the introduction in section IA (the General Principles for the Establishment of the World Heritage List) of a new description of the tests of authenticity and integrity as *the criteria and conditions of authenticity or integrity adopted by the Committee*⁹. The introduction of this phrase reinforces the idea of having a set of standards or measures by which to judge authenticity which is essentially the role of attributes when they are first introduced into UNESCO official terminology in 2005.

The issues raised around the monumentalist approach of the *Operational Guidelines*, based in European conservation practices, occasioned much debate over the first 30 years of the *Convention*, during which its scope grew and evolved, for example with the adoption

⁵ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (1997). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, paragraph 9. Future references to various editions of the Guidelines will be given as OG followed by the date of publication and the paragraph reference.

⁶ ICOMOS. (1964). *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter)*.

⁷ UNESCO World Heritage Centre (1977-1992). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO. The paragraph number varies according to the edition of the OG but tends to standardise on para 24 (b) (i).

⁸ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (1994-2002). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO. OG 1994 paragraph 24 (b) (i) to OG 2002 paragraph 24 (b) (i).

⁹ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (1994-2002). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO OG 1994 to OG 2002 paragraphs 6, 8, 9 but the paragraph may vary.

of the cultural landscape category in 1994. According to Christina Cameron and Mechtild Rössler:

*The Convention's evolution could be characterised as the disappearance of the notion of artistic masterpiece, the emergence of an anthropological concept of authenticity and the articulation of cultural landscapes as the connecting tissue between culture and nature*¹⁰.

This debate inevitably influenced the approach to authenticity, particularly after Japan joined the *World Heritage Convention* in 1992. Japanese initiative led to the Nara meeting of 1994 which produced the *Nara Document on Authenticity*, which was finally endorsed by the World Heritage Committee in 1999¹¹. This provided a much more flexible, relativist approach to authenticity based on the concept that

*All cultures and societies are rooted in the particular forms and means of tangible and intangible expression which constitute their heritage, and these should be respected*¹².

The introduction of 'attribute' in World Heritage documentation

Apart from being a major shift in approaches to authenticity, the *Nara Document* also introduced the term 'attributed' into the debate. A key point of the Document is the fact that values, which can be very diverse, are attributed to heritage and to cultural properties. It is stated in paragraph 9 that *conservation of cultural heritage is rooted in the values attributed to the heritage*. Paragraph 11 refers to *values attributed to cultural properties*. Appendix 1 to the *Nara Document* twice mentions *attributed values*. From 'attributed values' of heritage to 'attributes of heritage' is a relatively small step in drafting.

Between 2000 and 2005 there was a major revision of the *Operational Guidelines*, involving four successive drafts, expert meetings, and much time at ordinary and extraordinary sessions of the World Heritage Committee itself. Authenticity figured largely in these discussions. The end result was that new text on authenticity was included in the 2005 edition of the *Operational Guidelines* and has been repeated in successive editions up to the present day¹³. In adopting this text, the World Heritage Committee largely adapted text from the *Nara Document on Authenticity*, thus taking a much more relativist approach to authenticity and recognising that different approaches might be needed according to the

¹⁰ Cameron, Christina and Mechtild Rössler. (2013). *Many voices, one vision: the early years of the World Heritage Convention*. Ashgate, Farnham, p. 101.

¹¹ *ibid.* p. 85 - 90

¹² ICOMOS. (1994). *The Nara Document on Authenticity*. Paris: ICOMOS, paragraph 7.

¹³ See <http://whc.unesco.org/en/guidelines/>

cultural context of the heritage being assessed.

Read alongside one another, the linkages between the *Nara Document* and paragraphs 79 – 86 of the *Operational Guidelines* are very clear. Paragraph 80 of the *Guidelines* derives from paragraph 9 of the *Nara Document*, paragraph 81 from paragraph 11, paragraph 84 from the last sentence of paragraph 13 and Appendix 2 of the *Nara Document*. Paragraph 82 copies the now well-known list of attributes of authenticity from paragraph 13 of the *Nara Document*.

One of the changes in the text of the *Operational Guidelines* from that of the *Nara Document* is the substitution in paragraph 82 of ‘attributes’ for ‘aspects of the sources’ of information to which authenticity judgements are linked in the text adapted from para 13 of the *Nara Document*. The key change in the *Operational Guidelines*, apart from the use of ‘attributes’, is to link the truthful and credible expression of cultural values to the assessment of whether properties meet the conditions of authenticity, which links back to the text used in the *Operational Guidelines* from 1994 (see above):

82 *Depending on the **type** of cultural heritage, **and** its cultural context, **properties may be understood to meet the conditions of authenticity if their cultural values (as recognized in the nomination criteria proposed) are truthfully and credibly expressed through a variety of attributes including:***

- *form and design;*
- *materials and substance;*
- *use and function;*
- *traditions, techniques and management systems;*
- *location and setting;*
- *language, and other forms of intangible heritage;*
- *spirit and feeling; and*
- *other internal and external factors* ¹⁴.

(text in bold is **not** quoted from paragraph 13 of the *Nara Document*; everything else is)

This key passage thus combines the new approach of the *Nara Document* with the existing idea that there are conditions of authenticity which must be met by a successful candidate

¹⁴ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2005-). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO.

property for the World Heritage List.

The term ‘attribute’ is used less in the 2005 edition of the *Operational Guidelines* than in more recent editions. Paragraph 88, referring to integrity, speaks of *the wholeness and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes*. Paragraphs 100 says that *boundaries should be drawn to include all those areas and attributes* that convey the Outstanding Universal Value of the property. Paragraph 104 says that the buffer zone should include, among others, *attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection*.

It is possible to see in the usage of ‘attribute’ in 2005 already the beginning of two different, if allied, meanings given to ‘attribute’ within the World Heritage system. While the attributes identified in Operational Guideline paragraph 82 could be construed as broadly-defined attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, in practice, attributes of Outstanding Universal Value need to be more closely defined and more definitely related to physical features of the World Heritage property concerned. The optimal use of these eight attributes, as set out in the World Heritage Resource Manual *Preparing World Heritage Nominations*¹⁵, seems to be more one of them being used as criteria or condition statements with which to assess the truthful and credible expression of individual attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

The key to their successful use in this way is to select the correct one(s) to assess the authenticity of the Outstanding Universal Value of a particular property. For an archaeological site, for example, the key criterion to judge authenticity is materials and substance since its authenticity will lie most in the intactness of the archaeological deposits. Application of that test would involve assessment of how far the archaeological deposits actually survive. For an architectural composition, the preferred test might be the form and design of the building and the extent to which it corresponded to what was originally built. For a property in active religious use, the relevant criteria might be its use and function as a place of worship. Often more than one of these eight attributes may be relevant to assessing the authenticity of a World Heritage property. They are best conceptualised as being ‘attributes of authenticity’, used to establish that the condition of authenticity is met before a site is inscribed and to assess whether future changes to the property or its setting will adversely affect its authenticity.

The other use of ‘attribute’ emerging from the 2005 *Operational Guidelines* is the idea of

¹⁵ UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN. (2011). *Preparing World Heritage Nominations. (Second edition)*. Paris: UNESCO World Heritage Centre., pp. 61-65.

attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. These will be the elements of the property which carry or represent its Outstanding Universal Value. They might be physical elements of the property, or they might be relationships between elements of the property, or related to its essence or its meaning¹⁶ (see below for a fuller definition). This lies behind the requirement in 2005, for example, for the boundaries of the World Heritage property to *include all those areas and attributes which are a direct tangible expression of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property*¹⁷.

Evolution of the use of ‘attribute’ in the World Heritage system since 2005

Since 2005, the requirements concerning attributes of authenticity have changed little. There has been considerable development in the use of the concept of attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. This has made more clear the distinction between two different use of the word ‘attribute’ within the World Heritage system.

This appears to have been driven by two factors.

Firstly, in 2005 the World Heritage Committee decided to introduce Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for each World Heritage property. Since 2007, these have been adopted for all new inscriptions and there has been a massive programme of work to develop Retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for properties inscribed earlier than then. The Statement should: *include a summary of the Committee’s determination that the property has Outstanding Universal Value, identifying the criteria under which the property was inscribed, including the assessments of the conditions of integrity or authenticity, and of the requirements for protection and management in force. The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value shall be the basis for the future protection and management of the property*¹⁸.

This paragraph has been slightly amended over the last 15 years but essentially the requirement remains the same. The World Heritage Committee adopted a format for the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value in 2011. This states:

¹⁶ ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN, and UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2010). *Guidance on the preparation of retrospective Statements of Outstanding Universal Value for World Heritage Properties.*, p.6

¹⁷ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2005-). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, paragraph 100.

¹⁸ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2005). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, paragraph 155.

A Statement of Outstanding Universal Value should respect the following format (2 A4 pages max):

- a) Brief synthesis*
- b) Justification for Criteria*
- c) Statement of integrity (for all sites)*
- d) Statement of Authenticity (for sites under criteria i-vi)*
- e) Requirements for protection and management*¹⁹

The UNESCO Resource Manual *Preparing World Heritage Nominations* gives guidance on the number of words for each section of the Statement. The brief synthesis should summarise factual information about the property in 150 words, and its qualities (values, attributes) in a further 150 words. The maximum length of the citation for each criterion of Outstanding Universal Value met by the property should be 200 words. The statement of integrity and the statement of authenticity should each have up to 200 words. Requirements for protection and management should be covered in no more than 350 words (200 to describe the overall framework, and 150 specific long-term expectations²⁰).

This statement of between around 1250 and 2000 words provides far more official definition of why a property has been inscribed on the World Heritage List than was previously the case. It will therefore identify far more physical features, relationships between features and so forth, as being recognised as supporting the Outstanding Universal Value than was ever the case before. These are regarded as attributes of Outstanding Universal Value. Increasingly these are separately listed within a nomination dossier or a management plan where more space is available for further description.

This definition of attributes of Outstanding Universal Value comes from the Section II Questionnaire for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting:

Attributes, more commonly called features in the case of natural properties, are those elements, processes or features that convey and make manifest the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of a property. Identification and understanding of their interrelationships are crucial to understanding OUV and therefore to ensuring appropriate protection and management mechanisms. Attributes should be the focus of protection and management.

¹⁹ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2011). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, Annex 10.

²⁰ UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS and IUCN. (2011). *Preparing World Heritage Nominations*. note 16, p. 74

Attributes can be physical qualities or fabric, or the relationships between them. Attributes can also be processes impacting on physical qualities, such as natural or agricultural processes, social arrangements or cultural practices that have shaped distinctive landscapes. For natural properties, they can include landscape features, habitats, aspects of environmental quality (such as intactness, high/pristine environmental quality), scale and naturalness of habitats, and size and viability of wildlife populations.

As an example of attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, those identified for the Stonehenge, Avebury and Associated Sites World Heritage Site are all derived from its Statement of Outstanding Universal Value. These were first defined in the 2009 Management Plan for Stonehenge alone²¹. The seven attributes are:

1. Stonehenge itself as a globally famous and iconic monument.
2. The physical remains of the Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ceremonial monuments and associated sites.
3. The siting of Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ceremonial sites and monuments in relation to the landscape.
4. The design of Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ceremonial sites and monuments in relation to the skies and astronomy.
5. The siting of Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ceremonial sites and monuments in relation to each other.
6. The disposition, physical remains and settings of the key Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary, ceremonial and other monuments and sites of the period, which together form a landscape without parallel.
7. The influence of the remains of Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ceremonial monuments and their landscape settings on architects, artists, historians, archaeologists and others.

As shown by this list of attributes, an attribute can be a physical feature, a relationship between features, relationship to a landscape or deal with ideas and concepts. For Stonehenge we have both concepts inherited from the past, such as the relationship of Stonehenge to the skies and astronomy, and also its influence in modern times on architects, artists, historians, archaeologists and others.

²¹ Christopher Young, Amanda Chadburn, Isabelle Bedu. (2009). *Stonehenge World Heritage Site Management Plan 2009*. English Heritage, pp. 28-31.

While the Statement of Outstanding Universal only has space to say that the site is important for its Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ceremonial monuments, this extracted list can be further used to develop lists of the physical remains of the Neolithic and Bronze Age funerary and ceremonial monuments and associated sites. This provides a firm basis for spatial planners and others to advise and decide on proposals for change. It is relatively simple to decide whether a proposed structure will interfere with the relationship between different monuments within the World Heritage property, or with the relationship between Stonehenge and the midsummer sunrise or the midwinter sunset, believed to be the key intended astronomical factors there.

This example, and there are many others, demonstrates the usefulness of attributes of Outstanding Universal Value in the management of a World Heritage property and control of development that might affect it. They also have an important role in monitoring World Heritage properties since the condition of individual attributes are a good guide to the overall condition of a property. The Section II Questionnaire of the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting, launched in 2017²², deals with individual properties. Site managers are asked to assess the condition of up to 15 key attributes of Outstanding Universal Value of their property according to a scale of Lost/ Seriously Compromised/ Compromised/ Preserved (Question 3.2). In Question 4.18.1 site managers are asked to assess the likely condition of the key attributes at the time of the Fourth Cycle of Periodic Reporting (approximately six years after the current cycle)²³.

Attributes are therefore a very valuable tool for use by site managers, spatial planners and decision takers. One result of this is that the number of references in the *Operational Guidelines* to attributes which convey Outstanding Universal Value has increased. In particular in 2011, Annex 5, the Nomination Format, was revised to include more direct reference to attributes conveying/ carrying Outstanding Universal Value²⁴. References to attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are well-embedded in the Section II Questionnaire for the Third Cycle of Periodic Reporting. As noted above. Guidance from the Advisory Bodies, such as the 2011 ICOMOS *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessment*²⁵, also includes many references to attributes.

²² The Third Cycle was launched by the World Heritage Committee in 2017 but actually started to be implemented in 2018. See <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/2017/whc17-41com-18-en.pdf>

²³ See <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2017/whc17-41com-10A-en.pdf>

²⁴ UNESCO World Heritage Centre. (2011). *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*. Paris: UNESCO, Annex 5.

²⁵ ICOMOS. (2011). *Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments for Cultural World Heritage Properties*.

Conclusions

The term ‘attribute’ is used in the World Heritage context to define two concepts which have evolved differently over the last two decades. On the one hand there are attributes of authenticity, as they have been termed in this paper. On the other there are attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.

Attributes of authenticity can in fact be seen as very broadly defined attributes of Outstanding Universal Value but are not at a level of detail which much helps site management. They actually work reasonably well as a suite of criteria for assessing the authenticity of a property.

Partly because the so-called attributes of authenticity are so broad, and partly because of the introduction of Statements of Outstanding Universal Value, more detailed attributes of Outstanding Universal Value have developed alongside them. These have come over the past ten years to be much more embedded, in guidance at least, in management activities, such as assessment of possible impacts of proposed developments and change, and in monitoring of site condition. Again, experience suggests that these are very useful tools for site management.

Both concepts of ‘attribute’ are important and valuable aspects of the nomination, management and monitoring of World Heritage properties. Neither concept is particularly complicated or confused but clearly many people are unclear as to how attributes should be used and why they are important. Further capacity-development in this area would be useful, but much of the misunderstanding may arise because ‘attribute’ in effect has two different meanings within the World Heritage system. This is confusing to native English speakers as well as for those for whom English is not their first language. There may also be confusion because synonyms for attributes of Outstanding Universal Value are in use within the World Heritage system. Natural heritage specialists tend to use the term ‘feature’ instead of ‘attribute’. ‘Value’ or ‘quality’ can also be used in place of ‘attribute’.

This is not a new problem. As long ago as 2003, during discussions of the revision of the *Operational Guidelines*, the 6th Extraordinary Session of the Committee included in their decision on the *Operational Guidelines* the following:

1.6 Define and be consistent in the use of the terms:

- “conservation” and “protection”;

- *“outstanding universal value,” “criteria,” “values,” “attributes,” “qualities” and “characteristics”;*
- *“management approach,” “management system,” “management plan” and “management and/or planning control”;* and
- *“property” and “site”*²⁶

A comprehensive rationalisation of terminology still needs to be carried out, despite a lot of tidying up of the text over the years. It will not be simple or short. In the meantime, it would be helpful to refer consistently to ‘attributes of authenticity’ or ‘attributes of Outstanding Universal Value’ to minimise confusion between the two different uses of the word ‘attribute’. Training and capacity development in the concept of attributes within the World Heritage system would also be very helpful.

²⁶ See <http://whc.unesco.org/archive/2003/whc03-6extcom-conf08e.pdf> Decision 5.1 Technical Annex 1.6